

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE 7TH MARINES



HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. MARINE CORPS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

A member of Company F, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, holding an M-14 rifle, waits for his companion to fire an M-79 grenade launcher at a Viet Cong position in March 1966. (USMC Photo A186813).

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by
James S. Santelli



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FOREWORD

This historical monograph is the tenth in a series of regimental histories. When completed, this series will cover in similar fashion each of the infantry and artillery regiments in the Fleet Marine Force, active and reserve. The present narrative not only highlights the significant actions of the 7th Marines, but also furnishes a general history of Marine Corps activities in which it took part.

Mr. James S. Santelli was a member of the staff of the Division of History and Museums from June 1967 to November 1974, during which time he occupied positions in both the Reference Section and Histories Section of the division. He holds both a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Master of Arts degree in history from the University of San Francisco. Mr. Santelli has coauthored articles on Marine Corps topics that have appeared in various publications dealing with military subjects. Presently, he is a writer for the Department of Labor.

In the pursuit of accuracy and objectivity, the Division of History and Museums welcomes comments on this booklet from key participants, Marine Corps activities, and interested individuals.



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PREFACE

A Brief History of the 7th Marines is a concise narrative of the regiment from its initial activation over a half century ago through its participation in World War II, the Korean War, and the war in Vietnam. Official records of the Marine Corps and appropriate historical works were utilized in compiling this chronicle. This booklet is published for the information of those interested in the 7th Marines and in the events in which it has participated.

The monograph was produced under the editorial direction of Mr. Henry I. Shaw, Jr., Chief Historian of the History and Museums Division. Final review and preparation of the manuscript was done by Miss Gabrielle M. Neufeld. Ms. Cora B. Lett of Word Processing Section of Headquarters Marine Corps typed the preliminary draft. Miss Catherine A. Stoll of the Publications Production Section set the manuscript in type and assisted Mr. Douglas Johnston in laying out the history. The maps were prepared by Sergeant Eric A. Clark and Staff Sergeant Jerry L. Jakes who also prepared the cover and title page art work. All illustrations are official Department of Defense (Marine Corps) photographs from the files of the Still Photograph Depository, History and Museums Division.

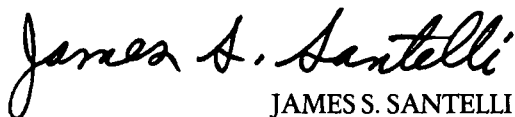

JAMES S. SANTELLI

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A Brief History of the 7th Marines

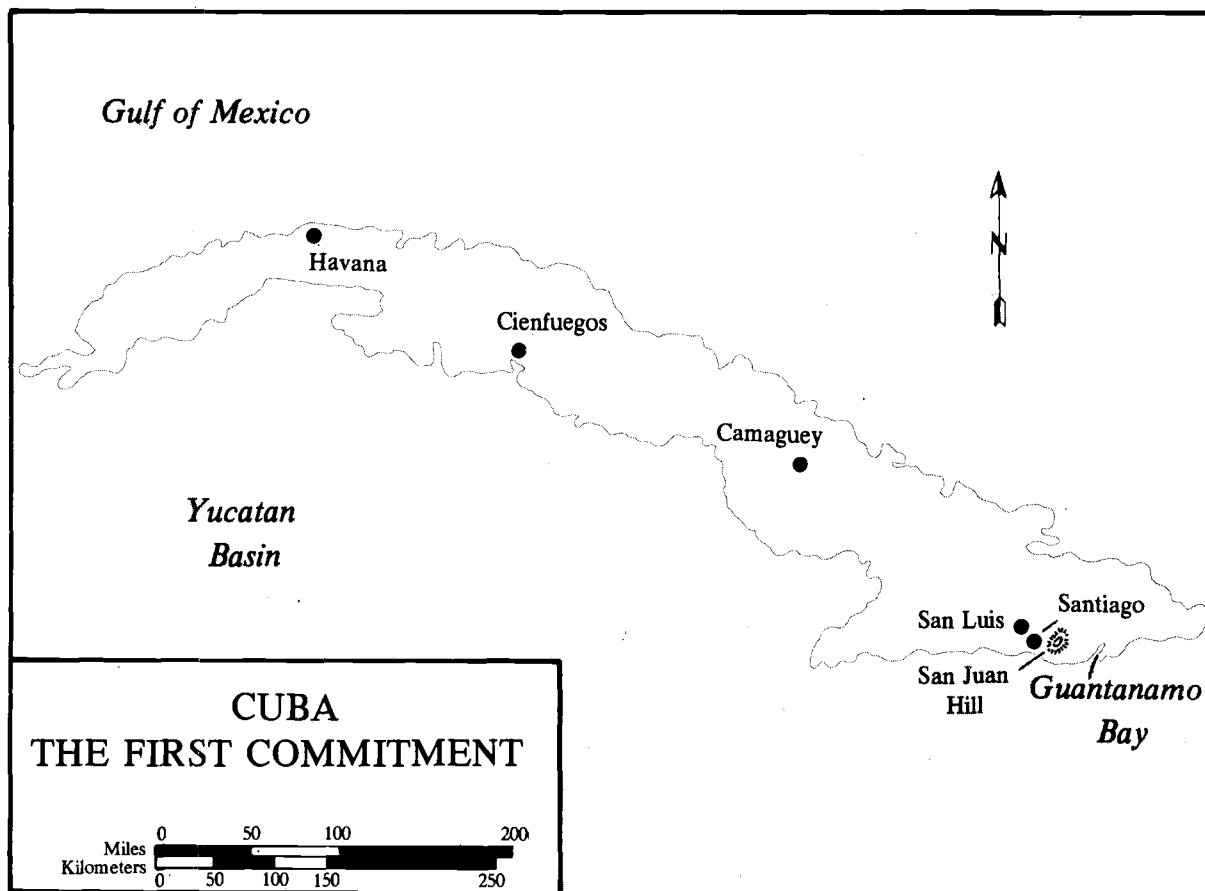
Genesis and the Cuban Prelude

The 7th Marines, because of its participation in numerous military operations and campaigns in the Western Pacific and in Asia, has long been associated with the Far East. The reason for the regiment's activation, however, did not originate in this region of the world but in the Caribbean. Internal disorder in Cuba in 1917 was the immediate cause that led to the creation of the 7th Regiment, the ancestor of the present 7th Marines. The outbreak of political unrest in Oriente Province early that year caused considerable dismay among American business interests on the island. Anxiety existed over the security of American-owned property, especially the sugar cane plantations. To ease these apprehensions and to put an end to the threats to American property, the United States in February 1917 ordered Marines ashore from several ships' detachments to protect the plantations and sugar mills. Less than 2 months later, the United States declared war on Germany and entered World War I. America's active participation in the war only amplified the necessity for the United States to continue safeguarding Cuban sugar as it was considered a strategic material. Maintenance of the supply of sugar not only to the United States but to other Allied countries was of vital concern to the American Government. The United States, nevertheless, started withdrawing its Marines from Cuba in spring 1917. It had been presumed that these troops would be needed in Europe.

It soon became apparent that the withdrawal had been premature even though political unrest in Cuba

had tapered off. Intelligence reports indicated the presence of German agents in the sugar-growing areas. These agents reportedly had given support to rebel forces and had encouraged them to perpetrate acts of sabotage on American-owned sugar installations. The American Government decided to reintroduce military forces that summer. An Army cavalry regiment was originally slated for deployment, but it could not be sent because of the pressing needs for manpower in France.¹ The Marine Corps was subsequently directed to furnish an expeditionary unit. All existing regiments were at the time either involved in preparations for deployment to France or were on expeditionary duty in Haiti or the Dominican Republic. None of these regiments could be spared for service in Cuba.

As a result, the Marine Corps activated the 7th Regiment in Philadelphia on 14 August 1917. Headquarters Detachment and the 93d and 94th Companies were its original component organizations. On 15 August, the 37th Company joined from Mare Island, California; on the 18th, the 59th Company came from New York City; and on the 20th, the 71st, 72d, 86th, and 90th Companies arrived from San Diego, California. Lieutenant Colonel Melville J. Shaw assumed command of the regiment on 19 August. Shaw was no stranger to Cuba. During the Spanish-American War he was brevetted to first lieutenant for gallantry in the June 1898 battle for Guantanamo Bay. Upon taking command Shaw immediately began preparations for the forthcoming expedition. Within 2



days the entire regiment had departed for Guantamo Bay with all companies embarked on board the transport USS *Prairie* and the cruiser USS *Charleston*. The number of Marines sailing south totaled approximately 900. Arrival in Cuba came on 25 August.²

Initially, there had been an attempt to disguise the deployment by giving the impression that the 7th Regiment was going to Cuba for training maneuvers. This was true to a degree. Upon departure it received orders from the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Major General George Barnett, directing its commanding officer to "institute a comprehensive system of training in field exercises, particularly reconnaissance, patrolling, military sketching, etc."³ Its primary mission of acting as a garrison and security force would be made public at a later date.

The 7th Regiment remained at the naval base at Guantamo following its arrival and did not immediately venture into nearby trouble spots. The nature of the deployment thus was ostensibly continued as a routine training operation. Reports of Ger-

man activity in the area still persisted, causing concern among American authorities. Lieutenant Colonel Shaw felt that German propaganda was adversely influencing the "lower classes" in Oriente and Camaguey Provinces. He, therefore, expected difficulties on the plantations. He recommended the continuation of the training ruse to allay suspicions of the actual intent behind the deployment. Specifically, he said it would be "made to appear that the troops are there for training purposes."⁴

Permission to move into the interior was granted by the Commandant in late October. Elements of the 7th Regiment began moving from Guantamo Bay to various cities in the region on the 24th. Detachments were deployed to Santiago, Camaguey City, San Luis, and Guantamo City. Headquarters was established on San Juan Hill, made famous by Theodore Roosevelt and his Rough Riders during the Spanish-American War.⁵ All the camps were located in eastern Cuba, a rugged, mountainous area. Forty years later, Fidel Castro started a revolt there that eventually led



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A detachment of mounted Marines rests near Camaguey, Cuba. Horses gave the 7th Regiment greater mobility and enabled the Marines to respond quickly to emergencies.

to the establishment of the first Communist regime in the Americas. The Marines were not to suppress dissident natives but were ordered to counteract the activities of agents of Germany and the other Central Powers. It was hoped that the presence of American military units would of itself counterbalance propaganda and attempts at sabotage. A prime objective of the deployment was to bring about a stabilizing and calming effect over the local populace.

Although the regiment did not engage in antirebel operations, it did actively guard American property by conducting wide-ranging patrols and reconnaissance missions. Often the Leathernecks were mounted to increase their mobility. The use of horses enabled the men to respond quickly to an emergency on the widely scattered plantations.⁶ Marine Headquarters late in September authorized an increase of 400 horses for the regiment. The saddles were obtained from sources in both the United States and Cuba. The additional horses were intended to provide the unit with the capacity of having 500 of its men mounted—over half the regiment. A desired byproduct of this move was to make the Marines more visible in the countryside. The men enthusiastically accepted the horses and their instruction in horsemanship. By late November, Shaw

reported that he was pleased with his mounted units. He was particularly happy with the “very good effect” they were having in the vicinity of Guantanamo City. The immediate area contained 15 important sugar mills. Earlier disorders at the mills subsided after Marine patrols were instituted.⁷ One technique utilized to quiet unrest without resorting to force was the subterfuge of “practice marches.” Where there were potential disturbances and reports of pro-German sympathy, units of the regiment would conspicuously move into the countryside under the guise that the Marines were conducting a training exercise. This “showing the flag” usually had the desired effect.⁸

Although the intervention by American troops—nothing new in Cuba—was welcomed by the Cuban Government, Shaw reported the laborers and peasants did not accept it “in their hearts.” He therefore set about to improve relations with the people. By the beginning of 1918, the regimental commander had made great strides in that direction. Cuban workers were by now accustomed to the sight of the Marines. Since there had been no occasion where armed force was necessary, most peasants accepted, at least grudgingly, the presence of the Americans. They were looked upon more as

policemen than as an occupying army. Shaw's efforts were praised by both Cuban and American officials. Governor Guillermo F. Masacaro of Santiago de Cuba Province personally lauded Shaw's attempts to establish harmonious relations. In March 1918, Henry M. Wolcott, the American consul in Santiago, wrote the State Department that Shaw and his regiment were "deserving of high commendation." Consul Wolcott stated that the men's conduct "had been exemplary and their relations officially and socially with the Cuban people was most cordial at all times." He went on to declare that:

There is no doubt that the presence of these troops and the intelligent, tactful activity of the commanding officer, have been very important factors in the maintenance of order throughout the country, consequent upon which has been the progress and safety the sugar crop.⁹

In carrying out their assigned tasks the Marines of the 7th Regiment never had to resort to force as they were not openly opposed in their patrolling. The only fighting that occurred between the Marines and

A lone Marine sentry stands guard duty. While in Cuba, the 7th Regiment actively guarded American property during World War I and the immediate postwar period.

National Archives Photo No. 127-G-519743



Cubans came during off-duty hours, and this was not combat in the traditional sense of the word. The causes, too much liquor and arguments over women, were age-old sources of trouble that plague all military organizations. In one serious incident in June 1918, off-duty Cuban Army soldiers and members of the 7th Regiment engaged in a fist fight in the red light district of Santiago. The brawl quickly deteriorated into a rock throwing match. Reportedly, the Cubans pulled knives and attacked the Marines. A few of the Cubans then fired on the Americans with handguns and rifles causing the unarmed Marines to scatter. The fight ended with three Leathernecks being injured, one seriously. In all about 25 shots were fired at the group of Marines. To avoid similar episodes in the future, Santiago's red light district was subsequently put off limits to the 7th Regiment.¹¹

Colonel Newt M. Hall, who received a brevet to major for valor during the Boxer Rebellion, replaced Lieutenant Colonel Shaw as commanding officer of the regiment in September 1918. Hall continued the policies of his predecessor and in the next 3 months the 7th Regiment covered approximately 3,200 miles on foot and on horseback in its patrol work. The patrols according to Colonel Hall had a "very good effect on the men employed in the mills and on the neighboring plantations, as the Marines are looked upon as a guarantee of order." Officers of the regiment had additional duties in that they conducted investigations of persons suspected of pro-German sympathies and activities. This task had been assumed at the request of the United States Legation in Havana.¹²

The mountainous terrain had taken its effect on the 7th's livestock. By January 1919, the regiment, although still carrying out extensive patrolling, was increasingly unable to rely on its animals for transportation. There were only 305 horses in the unit at the beginning of the month. A sizable percentage of these were not in the best of shape and could not, therefore, be fully utilized. The 7th Regiment also suffered from a lack of pack animals. Cuban horses were found to be too small, while mules were expensive. The price had doubled within a short time with the minimum being \$950 a horse in January 1919. As a result, the regiment began to depend more upon motorized vehicles. At this time it had in its inventory 14 trucks (the heaviest being 2 tons), 1 ambulance, 2 cars, and 4 motorcycles. There was, however, a drawback in the use of motor vehicles. They could only be utilized in the cities where the roads were good. The roads in the countryside were for the most part so poor that motor

transportation could only be used sparingly. In the rainy season they became impassable, and the only practical way to travel along them was by horse or mule.¹³

During its deployment in Cuba, the 7th Regiment was assigned to two different higher echelon organizations. First, it joined the 3d Provisional Brigade on 26 December 1917. Other units of the Brigade were the 8th and 9th Regiments. The 9th Regiment had entered Cuba that same month with the mission of assisting the 7th Regiment. The 8th Regiment, on the other hand, did not go to Cuba but was instead ordered to Galveston, Texas. Subsequently, the brigade's headquarters and the 9th Regiment were also transferred to Texas. When these units departed on 31 July 1918, the 7th Regiment was detached from the 3d Provisional Brigade. An assignment to another higher echelon did not take place for a number of months. Finally, on 21 December 1918, the regiment was attached to the 6th Provisional Brigade. The 1st Regiment, which had recently arrived in Cuba, was the other subordinate element of the brigade.¹⁴

For 2 years the 7th Regiment protected American-owned sugar plantations, sugar mills, railroads, and other installations. It was instrumental in seeing that the valuable sugar supply was processed and exported with only a minimal amount of interruption. With World War I over and with the easing of internal disorders, the American Government decided to recall most of its forces from Cuba. The 6th Provisional Brigade was deactivated on 21 June 1919, but the 7th

Regiment stayed on the island for 2 more months before being ordered home. The regiment was the last major Marine force to be withdrawn; two Marine companies, however, continued to occupy Camaguey Province until February 1922. Relocation of the 7th Regiment to Philadelphia was completed on 4 September 1919. The first overseas deployment of the unit thus passed into history, but this would not be the last time the regiment would see Cuba.

Postwar demobilization led to the deactivation of the 7th Regiment on 6 September 1919.¹⁵ The regiment remained in an inactive status throughout most of the interwar period. Activation of a unit bearing the designation of 1st Battalion, 7th Regiment occurred at San Diego on 1 April 1921, but it was subsequently redesignated as the 1st Battalion, 5th Brigade. It reacquired its initial designation on 21 March 1922. The battalion continued on active duty until 1 September 1924 when it was deactivated with its personnel being absorbed by the newly reorganized 4th Regiment.¹⁶ Shortly after the deactivation of the 1st Battalion, 7th Regiment, there appeared on the east coast a Reserve 7th Marine Regiment. It functioned off and on as a Reserve organization until the early 1930s. This unit is considered a separate organization and, in terms of lineage and honors, it is not connected to the present 7th Marines.¹⁷

On 6 September 1933, the regiment, bearing the present designation of 7th Marines, was reactivated at Quantico, Virginia. Colonel Richard P. Williams, a veteran of World War I and a former commander of

Members of the 7th Regiment march through the countryside of eastern Cuba in 1917.

National Archives Photo No. 127-G-518276



the Garde d'Haiti, was assigned as the commanding officer. The composition of the unit included Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Service Company, and two battalions of five companies each. It totaled 58 officers, 8 warrant officers, and 1,108 enlisted men. Personnel used to reform the regiment came from barracks and detachments located at Philadelphia and Annapolis, Maryland, and Quantico, Norfolk, and Portsmouth, Virginia.

As had been the case in 1917, the regiment was brought into existence for a possible move to Cuba because of an internal crisis that threatened American interests. But in this instance the entire regiment did not sail to the Caribbean. The first element to deploy was a machinegun platoon, consisting of 78 officers and men, that departed on 23 September 1933 on board the battleship USS *New Mexico*. The platoon's journey was cut short and it was soon returned to Quantico.¹⁸ Deployment of the 2d Battalion began on 3 October when it moved first to Norfolk. It sailed 6 days later on the battleship USS *Wyoming*, arriving at Guantanamo Bay on 14 October. The ship subse-

Colonel Richard P. Williams, first commanding officer of the regiment when it was reactivated in 1933, is shown here in the uniform he wore as Commandant of the Garde d' Haiti 1930-1933.

USMC Photo 524533



quently proceeded to Havana, but no troops were put ashore. Except for two short redeployments to Florida the battalion remained in Cuban waters through the end of January 1934. No landing was necessary, but the battalion maintained a ready posture and was poised to land to protect American interests should it have become necessary.

The rest of the regiment in the meantime was assigned on 18 December 1933 to the newly created Fleet Marine Force. A further reorganization during the next month led again to the deactivation of the regiment. Headquarters Company and Service Company were disbanded on 17 January 1934, while the 1st and 2d Battalions were redesignated as the 1st and 2d Battalions, Fleet Marine Force, respectively. The latter battalion was still in Cuban waters when this change occurred. This brief regenesis was the last for the 7th Marines until shortly before the Second World War.¹⁹

World War II Rebirth and South Pacific Deployment

The United States entered the 1940s with apprehension over the widening conflict in Europe. It initially desired to remain uninvolved but practicality dictated that it prepare for any eventuality, including the likelihood of war. The Marine Corps, as a result, embarked on a program of expansion in 1940. This gradual increase led to the reactivation of the 7th Marines on 1 January 1941. Ironically, Cuba was once more woven into the fabric of the history of the 7th Marines as this rebirth occurred at Guantanamo Bay. Colonel Earl H. Jenkins, an active participant in numerous expeditions to the Caribbean in the years following World War I, took command of the reformed unit. Besides a headquarters company, the regiment had three infantry battalions of five companies each. Personnel came mainly from the 5th Marines and from recruits recently arrived from the United States. The regiment was assigned to the 1st Marine Brigade. A month later the brigade was enlarged and redesignated as the 1st Marine Division.²⁰

Shortly after its reconstitution the regiment participated in landing exercises at Guantanamo and at Culebra. These maneuvers lasted until early spring when the regiment was ordered to the United States. It boarded the transport USS *Barnett** and sailed on 8

*The ship, commissioned in September 1940, was named in honor of Major General George Barnett, the 12th Commandant of the Marine Corps. It was redesignated APA 5 in 1943.

April for Charleston, South Carolina. The regiment soon established itself at the Marine Corps' recruit depot at Parris Island. There it resumed its training. In addition to amphibious exercises, emphasis was placed on night maneuvers, combat firing problems, beach reconnaissance, chemical warfare, demolitions, and air-ground communications.

One reason for this intense training was to prepare the regiment for a possible landing on the French Caribbean island of Martinique. Tension was growing between Vichy France, a German satellite, and the United States over a sizable French naval force at Martinique. The American Government was concerned that the naval flotilla and the island would be turned over to Germany. Plans were drawn up so the United States would be ready to take decisive action if negotiations failed. The 1st Marine Division plus elements of the Army's 1st Infantry Division were assigned the responsibility of making an amphibious landing on Martinique should that prove necessary. Fortunately, the United States did not have to resort to hostilities. The 7th Marines moved to New River, North Carolina, during the latter part of September 1941. The base was later renamed Camp Lejeune in honor of former Major General Commandant John A. Lejeune.²¹

The 7th Marines, following the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese, went on immediate alert for a possible overseas deployment. None took place, however, until the following spring. At that time the unit, minus its 3d Battalion, was detached from the 1st Marine Division and attached on 21 March to the newly created 3d Marine Brigade. The Regimental Weapons Company was activated on the same day. Deployment to the Pacific began on 2 April 1942, when the regiment minus the 3d Battalion, moved by train to Norfolk, Virginia. It subsequently loaded on board the transports USS *Heywood*, *McCawley*, and *Fuller*; departure was on the 10th. Meanwhile, the 3d Battalion had entrained for San Diego where it embarked on the USS *Harris*.^{**} The ship sailed on the 13th with Samoa as its destination. The entire regiment had in fact been ordered there. First to arrive was the 3d Battalion; it disembarked at American Samoa on 28 April. The remainder of the regiment arrived and disembarked on British-held Upolu in Western Samoa between 8 and 10 May. The 3d Battalion eventually transferred to Wallis Island, a French posses-

sion.²² All units of the regiment and the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, an artillery unit, were assigned the responsibility for garrisoning and defending the Samoan Islands. Their mission was one of repulsing Japanese incursions and helping to keep open the lines of communications between the United States and Australia and New Zealand. Fortunately, the Japanese made no real thrust into the area.

Guadalcanal

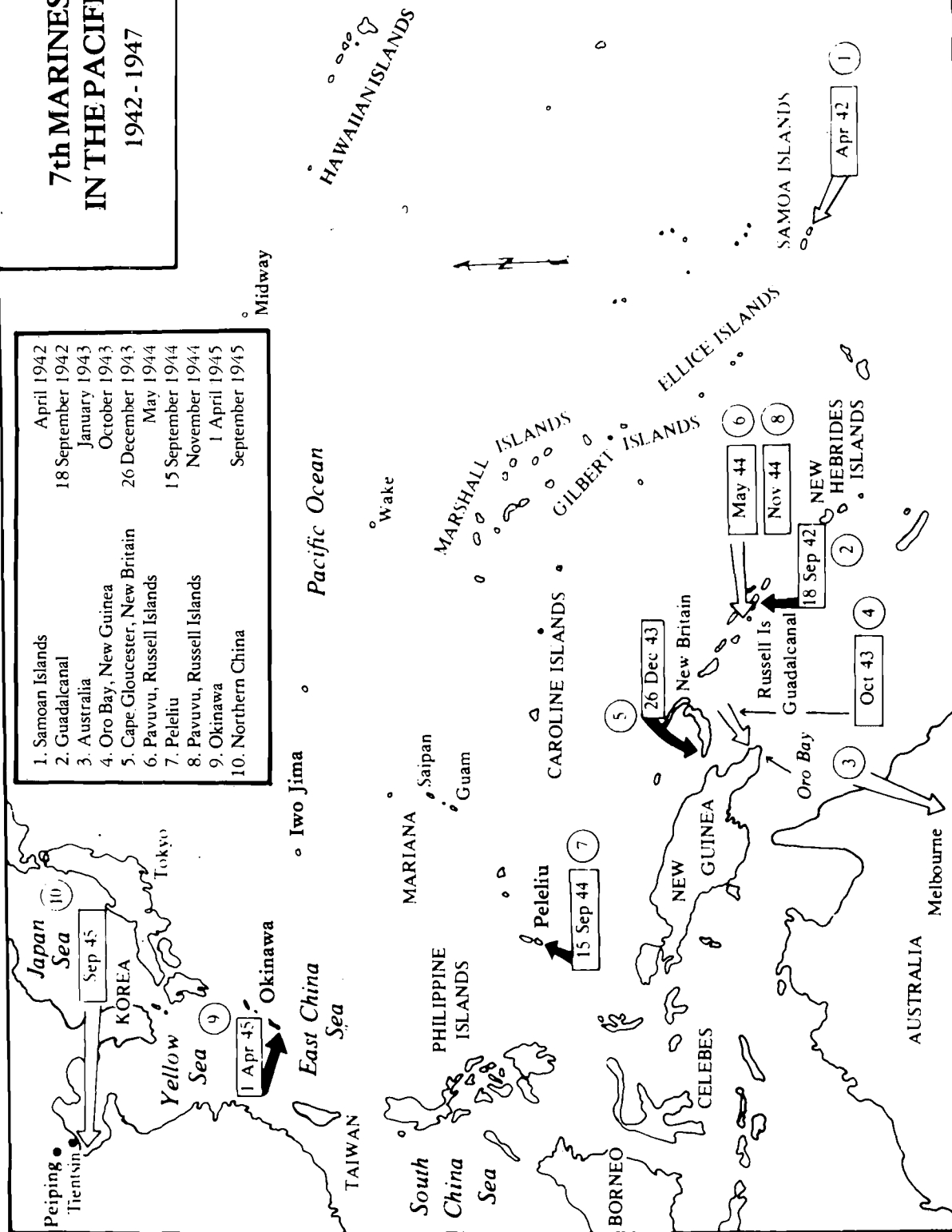
The men of the 7th Marines received word during the summer that they would be redeployed upon the completion of intensive jungle training. The regiment was relieved by the 22d Marines in August 1942. Upon being detached it began movement to the Santa Cruz Islands. Its mission was the occupation of Ndeni Island. The regiment, however, never reached the island. New orders directed the 7th Marines to reinforce Marine units already on Guadalcanal in their struggle with the enemy for control of the island which is located in the southern Solomons. Personnel from the reinforced regiment—almost 4,300 men—went ashore on Guadalcanal on 18 September. These fresh troops were promptly brought up to the line of battle and deployed near the 1st Marines in the vicinity of Lunga Point on the north coast of the island.²³ Within a week the 7th Marines, now commanded by Colonel Amor LeR. Sims, had joined the rest of the 1st Marine Division in combat operations against the Japanese.

Initially, the 1st Battalion was most involved in active engagements with the enemy. Major General Alexander A. Vandegrift, the division commander and later Commandant of the Marine Corps, desired more offensive operations. He, therefore, initiated a number of probing patrols beyond the Marines' perimeter with the objective of securing information on Japanese troop movements. The 1st Battalion, 7th Marines was given one such assignment. It had orders to cross the Matanikau River, investigate the territory between the river and the village of Kokumbona, then turn and make for the coast. The battalion under its commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Lewis B. ("Chesty") Puller, famed Banana Wars veteran, moved out on 23 September. A clash, the first between an enemy and a unit of the regiment, occurred on the following day. Shortly after nightfall Puller's men sur-

^{**}Later APAs 6, 4, 7, and 2 respectively. All four ships were named appropriately for former Commandants of the Marine Corps.

7th MARINES IN THE PACIFIC 1942 - 1947

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Samoa Islands | April 1942 |
| 2. Guadalcanal | 18 September 1942 |
| 3. Australia | January 1943 |
| 4. Oro Bay, New Guinea | October 1943 |
| 5. Cape Gloucester, New Britain | 26 December 1943 |
| 6. Pavuvu, Russell Islands | May 1944 |
| 7. Peleliu | 15 September 1944 |
| 8. Pavuvu, Russell Islands | November 1944 |
| 9. Okinawa | 1 April 1945 |
| 10. Northern China | September 1945 |





USMC Photo 51335

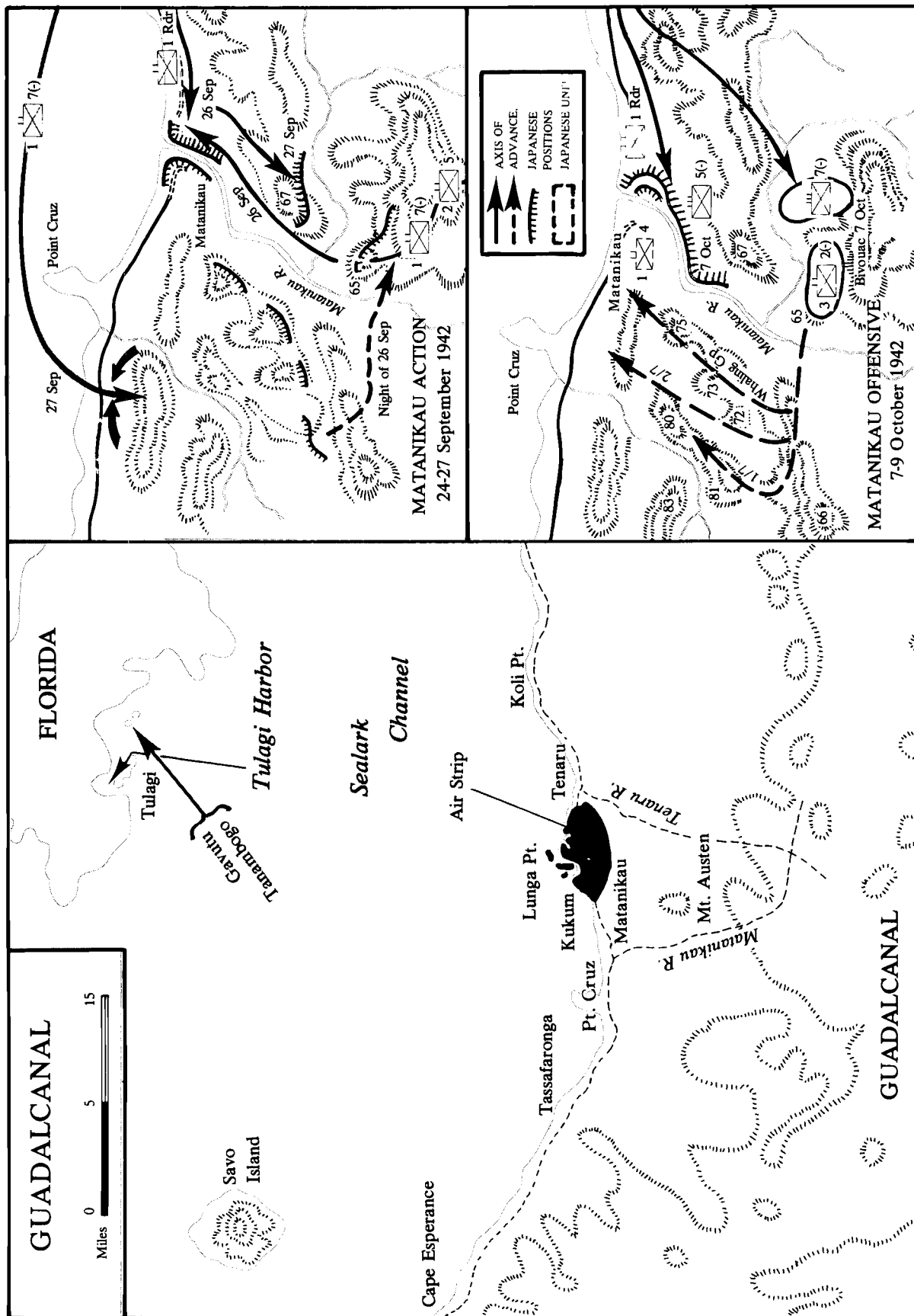
Marines head for the frontlines near the Matanikau River on Guadalcanal. Elements of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines were involved in a fierce battle with Japanese units east of the river in October 1942.

prised a force of Japanese on the slopes of Mount Austen, southwest of Lunga Point. This brief skirmish cost the Marines 32 casualties. Reinforcements from the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines joined the battalion on the 25th and the combined group of Americans pushed on, minus the wounded who were taken back to American-held Henderson Field. The Matanikau was reached on the 26th but no crossing was attempted; instead the two units turned north toward the sea. During the afternoon the column came under fire from the opposite bank. It halted and the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines tried to make a crossing but was repulsed. Fighting broke off at dusk. The 1st Raider Battalion in the meantime had reached the scene of the engagement and Colonel Merritt A. ("Red Mike") Edson, its commanding officer, assumed command of all three units. Edson, a veteran of World War I and a Navy Cross recipient for action in Nicaragua, later received the Medal of Honor for his leadership on Guadalcanal. Lieutenant Colonel Puller acted as his executive officer while the three battalions were operating together.

Combat resumed on the following day with the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, minus Company C, making an amphibious landing west of Point Cruz on the north coast. The intent of this maneuver was to launch an attack on the enemy's rear while he was engaging the other two Marine units. The landing came off smoothly and the battalion began hacking its way through the dense jungle. Suddenly, a strong enemy force hit the unsuspecting Marines. Major Otho Rogers who was in charge of the operation fell dead in the initial burst of fire. The attacking Japanese forced the Marines to establish defensive positions as

heavy fire stymied the men from making any further headway. The Raiders and the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines in the meantime had renewed the battle on their front but were still unable to penetrate enemy lines. Lieutenant Colonel Puller, learning of his battalion's tenuous position, boarded the destroyer USS *Ballard* (DD 267) to effect a rescue. After making contact with the beleaguered battalion, the ship began firing on Japanese positions. Sergeant Robert D. Raysbrook, braving enemy fire, stood on a ridge to semaphore the *Ballard* the much-needed fire control instructions. Under the guns of the destroyer, the Marines started withdrawing to the beach to await the arrival of landing craft to extricate them. As the men struggled to return to the beach they desperately fought off the attacking Japanese. A number of heroic deeds occurred during the movement to the beach. One act of valor was especially conspicuous. Platoon Sergeant Anthony P. Malanowski, Jr., knowing that it would mean sure death, chose to remain behind to cover the withdrawal of Company A. He was eventually overrun and killed by the enemy, but most of his unit's men were able to reach the beach safely.

As Navy and Coast Guard landing craft approached the shore, Japanese artillery opened up on the exposed vessels. A number of boats were struck and casualties were sustained by the crews. Their movement to the selected pickup area was seriously impeded. Observing the action below and the difficulties the boats were having, a lone Marine scout bomber, piloted by 2d Lieutenant Dale M. Leslie of VMSB-231, descended to a low level and made a number of strafing runs over enemy artillery sites. Heartened by the passes of the



“Dauntless” SBD the coxswains renewed their attempts to reach the shore. With Coast Guard Signalman First Class Douglas Munro leading the way, the boats succeeded in maneuvering through continuous Japanese fire to finally reach the beach. Munro was subsequently killed as he covered the extrication phase of the withdrawal. Perseverance combined with a strenuous effort resulted in the removal of the battalion, although the enemy fusillade had delayed completion of the rescue. Sergeants Raysbrook and Malanowski and Lieutenant Leslie were each awarded the Navy Cross for their efforts in the withdrawal. Signalman Munro received the Medal of Honor for helping to make the rescue a success. Once safely on board the *Ballard*, the 1st Battalion counted its casualties and found the Japanese fire had taken a heavy toll—24 killed and 23 wounded.²⁴

Another attempt at driving across the Matanikau began on 7 October with elements of the assault group coming from the 2d, 5th, and 7th Marines. The latter unit, less its 3d Battalion which remained in reserve, crossed without incident. Resistance to the attacking force was encountered eventually by all units after the Marines were established on the opposite bank. Once again the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines made the most significant contact of the probe. Puller’s unit on 9 October found a strong concentration of Japanese in a deep ravine located about 1,500 yards inland from Point Cruz. The tenacious commander immediately brought artillery and mortar fire to bear on the enemy. Those who survived the barrage tried to scramble up the far side of the ravine. Escape proved fruitless as the Marines raked the side of the hill with rifle and machinegun fire. Following the destruction of this group of enemy, the battalion and the rest of the raiding force of Marines withdrew back across the river. Fighting had lasted for 3 days with the Americans inflicting 700 casualties on the Japanese.²⁵

The next major engagement for the 7th Marines took place on 25 October* with the 1st Battalion again bearing the brunt of a strong enemy attack. The unit at this time was deployed southeast of Lunga Point and Henderson Field. Shortly after midnight a large enemy unit positioned itself opposite the battalion’s defenses; once ready, the Japanese rushed forth in a headlong *banzai* charge against the 1st Bat-



USMC Photo 56976
Sergeant John Basilone, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines—Medal of Honor, Guadalcanal.

talion’s lines. The Marines held against the onslaught until reinforcements from the Army’s 3d Battalion, 164th Infantry Regiment arrived. The concentrated fires from the two battalions plus supporting artillery repulsed the attack. By 0700, the Japanese had departed the scene of the battle, leaving the field strewn with the bodies of their dead. Sergeant John (“Manila John”) Basilone received the Medal of Honor for this fight, because of the courage he displayed in manning his machinegun and in braving enemy fire to bring up much needed ammunition. He thus had the double distinction of being the first enlisted Marine in World War II and also the first member of the 7th Marines to be awarded the medal.²⁶

Another strong Japanese assault was launched on the 26th. This time it hit elements of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Herman H. Hanneken,** a veteran of the occupation of both Haiti and Nicaragua. The Americans threw the attackers back after a fierce, but brief fight in an area near the coast and just east of the Matanikau River. The 7th Marines acquired its second Medal of Honor winner as a result of the engagement. Platoon

*This battle resulted in Lieutenant Colonel Puller being awarded his third Navy Cross. He already had two for Nicaragua. Subsequently, he would acquire two more: one for the New Britain Campaign and one during the Korean War.

**Hanneken, already a holder of the Medal of Honor and two Navy Crosses for his exploits in Latin America, received a Silver Star for an engagement that took place in early November 1942.



USMC Photo 56974

Platoon Sergeant Mitchell Paige had already been commissioned as a second lieutenant when he received the Medal of Honor for his performance on Guadalcanal.

Sergeant (later Colonel) Mitchell Paige directed the fire of his machinegun section until the crews were either killed or wounded. He then singlehandedly manned first one gun then a second. In the latter stages of the battle Paige organized and led a bayonet charge which drove the enemy off and prevented a breakthrough in Marine lines. Major (later Brigadier General) Odell M. Conoley, the battalion executive officer, earned the Navy Cross during the same engagement.²⁷

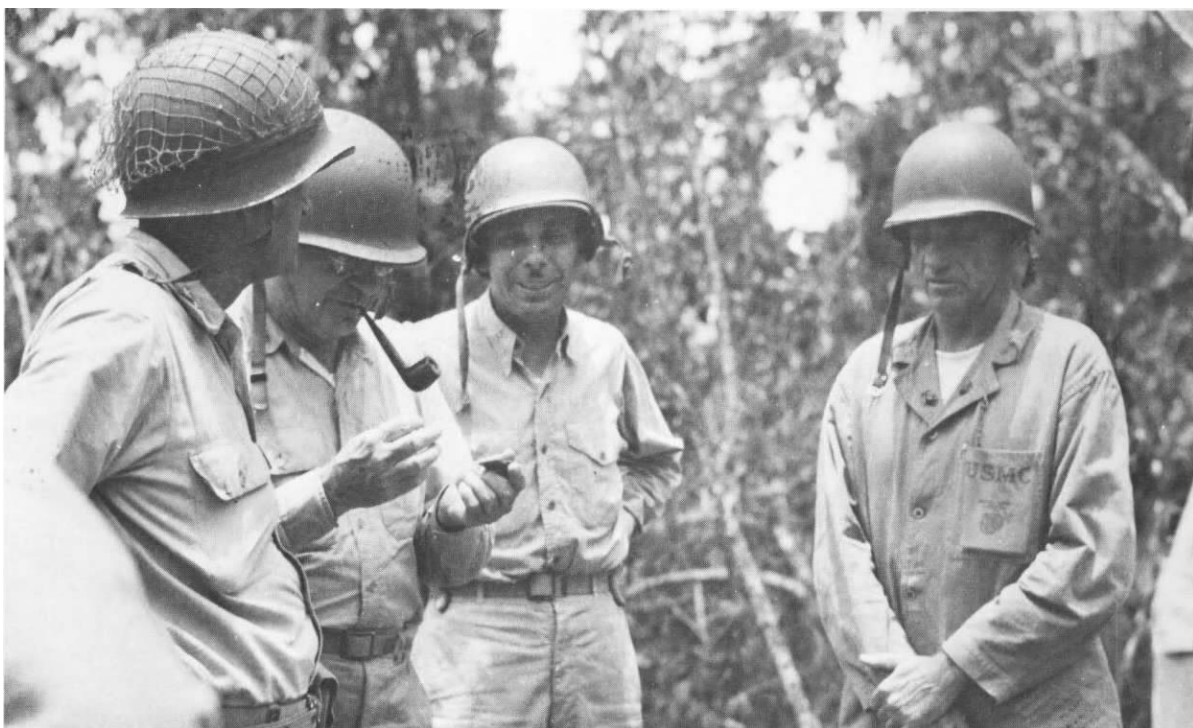
Between 8 and 12 November 1942, the 1st and 2d Battalions were involved in a number of sharp encounters with enemy units around Koli Point, which is about 5 miles east of Lunga Point; but heavy fighting for the regiment soon ended as the entire 7th Marines pulled back to the Lunga Point defensive area. For the next several weeks the unit carried out routine patrols to eliminate those Japanese soldiers who still remained behind in the areas seized by the Americans.²⁸ On 9 December, the 1st Marine Division began stand down procedures. Command of all troops ashore subsequently passed from General Vandegrift to Major General Alexander M. Patch, commander of the Army's Americal Division. Most of the 1st Marine Division had seen 4 months of intense fighting and, as a result, a large percentage of its units were weakened by casualties, malaria, and just

plain fatigue. The men needed a rest from the rigors of Guadalcanal's unhealthy climate and harsh terrain.²⁹

Relief on the 7th Marines took place in January 1943. The entire regiment sailed from Guadalcanal on the 5th on board the transports USS *President Jackson* (AP 37), *President Adams* (AP 38), and *President Hayes* (AP 39). A week later the three ships dropped anchor in Port Phillip Bay off Melbourne, Australia. The regiment moved ashore and went into camp at Mount Martha, a few miles outside of the city. Eventually all members of the 1st Division were relocated to Australia.³⁰ Back on Guadalcanal the battle continued—a responsibility of the U.S. Army. The campaign finally came to an end on 9 February after the Japanese completed the withdrawal of their forces. Although the enemy was able to evacuate thousands of troops, the Japanese lost nearly 25,000 men killed, died of wounds and disease, missing, and captured in fighting on Guadalcanal. American Marine and Army units during the campaign sustained over 6,300 killed and wounded. The first United States offensive against the Japanese had resulted in a tangible American victory. The forward thrust of the enemy into the South Pacific had been stopped; America now prepared to roll the Japanese back from their initial conquests.

The first order of business in Australia was to give the men a well-deserved liberty. Melbourne, with its many similarities to an American city, was the focal point for Marines on leave. The Australian people responded to the arrival of the 1st Division with great warmth and genuine hospitality. The newspapers, in fact, welcomed the Americans by calling them "the saviours of Australia." Most Marines viewed their stay in Australia as an enjoyable respite from the unpleasantness and horrors of war. Fond memories of both the country and the people are carried by the men who were stationed in Australia in 1943.

Once replacements and supplies arrived from the United States, the division reorganized and made plans to initiate a series of training exercises. Before the division could embark on maneuvers, lost and wornout equipment had to be replaced. One item that would prove to have a significant effect in later battles of the war was acquired by the 7th Marines. The M-1, the first semiautomatic service rifle to be produced in quantity by the United States, was issued to the 1st Division shortly after its arrival in Australia. Beginning in April, training was conducted with the new weapons instead of the old bolt-action Springfields. Combat training emphasized the techniques of amphibious warfare with a number of practice assaults



USMC Photo 53330

Lieutenant General Thomas Holcomb, CMC, makes an inspection tour of the 7th Marines on Guadalcanal in December 1942. Left to right: Major General Alexander A. Vandegrift, 1st Division commander; Lieutenant General Holcomb; Colonel Amor L. Sims, regimental commander; and Lieutenant Colonel Julian N. Frisbie, executive officer.

taking place that spring in Port Phillip Bay. These exercises were designed in anticipation of further campaigns in the South Pacific.³¹

New Britain

The regiment in summer 1943 received notification of its inclusion in the forthcoming 1st Marine Division landing at Cape Gloucester on the western tip of the island of New Britain. American strategists by mid-1943 began formulating plans for the capture of the Philippines. To facilitate an approach to the former colony, it was necessary to force an opening of the Vitiaz and Dampier Straits separating New Guinea and New Britain. With the straits in friendly hands Japanese bases along the New Guinea coast would become vulnerable to pressure by the United States. Relatively safe access to the Philippines could then be exploited. In accord with this thinking the decision was made to establish an American presence on

western New Britain. A successful seizure of this area would hopefully accomplish a secondary objective—further isolation of the enemy bastion at Rabaul in eastern New Britain. The 1st Marine Division, now commanded by Major General William H. Rupertus, had the assignment of carrying out the assault. The landing phase of the campaign was scheduled for 26 December 1943 with Cape Gloucester as the designated target.³²

In early fall after 8 months in Australia, the 7th Marines left in two echelons for the staging area at Oro Bay, New Guinea. The first arrived on 2 October; the second on 9 October. Beginning on the latter date, the troops were subjected to intermittent Japanese aerial bombardment. Although the bombing continued until the end of the month, the regiment was still able to conduct amphibious exercises as part of the preparation for the upcoming operation.³³ Over 2 months elapsed before the invasion force started moving to the objective with the 7th Marines leaving on Christmas Eve. The regiment, under Colonel Julian N. Frisbie, had been delegated the responsibility of securing the beachhead as quickly as possible. Frisbie,

a Banana Wars veteran, won a Silver Star on Guadalcanal while he was executive officer of the regiment.

The convoy carrying the assault force rendezvoused in Buna Harbor north of Oro Bay before sailing to Cape Gloucester on D-minus-1; arrival came early on the following day, the 26th. As H-hour drew near, Navy cruisers and destroyers opened fire on predetermined targets. Air strikes were also employed. The men of the 7th Marines in the meantime prepared to transfer from their destroyer transports (APDs) to landing craft. With the Navy's guns hammering away at Japanese positions, the Marines loaded on board LCVs (Landing Craft, Vehicle and Personnel) for the journey to the beach. Shortly after the last salvo was fired, the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines headed for shore. It landed at 0746. It was the first unit of the invasion force to land on the narrow beach and was immediately followed by the 1st Battalion which waded ashore 2 minutes later. The last battalion of the regiment, the 2d, made its way through the surf to the beach approximately an hour after the other two units had set foot on the island. All units of the division succeeded in coming ashore on time. The landings on D-day, 26 December, had taken place without a hitch.

The assault troops met little resistance. One brisk but deadly clash, however, did take place in the initial landings. Elements of Lieutenant Colonel William R. Williams' 3d Battalion, 7th Marines upon reaching the shore came under long-range machinegun fire from hidden enemy bunkers. Reduction of the fortifications was carried out by the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines which suffered a number of casualties. For the most part, the real enemy was not the Japanese but the dense jungles. New Britain's tropical rain forest and nearly impenetrable swamps combined to hamper the maneuverability of the invasion force once it pushed out from the beach. The Americans were also plagued by a near constant rain that fell in the first day of the campaign. The deluge brought on by the advent of the rainy season often turned normally dry, high-ground areas into quagmires.³⁴

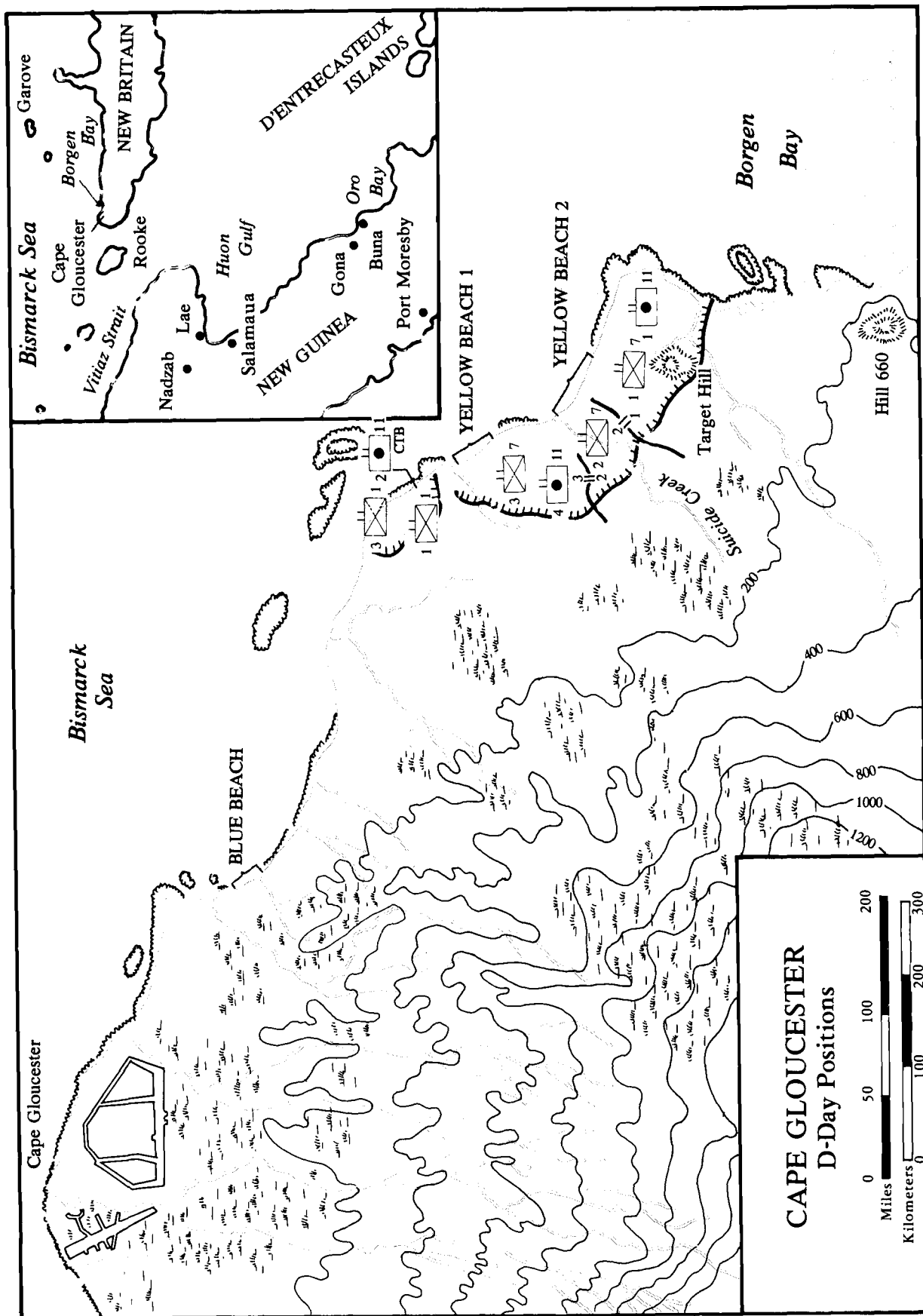
Opposition from the Japanese continued to be light throughout the first day. Bad terrain notwithstanding, all major division objectives were attained, including the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines' capture of the key geographical feature of the region—Target Hill. Division units next concentrated their attention on the nearby Cape Gloucester airdrome. The troops hacked and slashed their way through the jungle to attack the Japanese installation.³⁵ The beachhead meanwhile

steadily expanded with the Americans making little contact with the enemy.

The Japanese delayed their counterthrust, however, only until the morning of D-plus-1. Attacking during a driving rainstorm, the enemy's *2d Battalion, 53d Infantry* then hit the positions of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, which held the center of the Marine perimeter. Three times the enemy hurled his troops at the battalion, but on each occasion the Americans held. No significant penetration occurred. The battalion now under Lieutenant Colonel Conoley (recently promoted) inflicted severe losses on the Japanese. Two hundred dead were counted on the battlefield. Those who survived retreated into the jungle shortly after daybreak. Conoley later received the Silver Star for his leadership in the repulse of the attack.³⁶

The 1st Division pressed on with its drive toward the airfield that morning, but the first Marines did not reach it until 29 December. The field was secured by elements of the 1st and 5th Marines on the 30th after a brief fight.³⁷ Brigadier General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., assistant division commander and later the 20th Commandant of the Marine Corps, then headed a new drive southward along Borgen Bay following the seizure of the airdrome. The main units in this thrust, which started on 2 January 1944, were the 7th Marines; 3d Battalion, 5th Marines; and the 1st and 4th Battalions, 11th Marines. The last two units provided artillery support. One major encounter with the enemy took place along a small stream which soon acquired the nickname "Suicide Creek." For 2 days, the entrenched Japanese halted the Marines. The stalemate was finally broken with tank support. Only by laborious effort had the armor been brought up and placed into positions to assault the enemy fortifications. A new advance was ordered with the tanks leading the way. This time the obstacles were breached and Japanese resistance disintegrated. Once the breakthrough had been achieved the column pushed on and continued its march.³⁸

Another significant engagement began on 9 January when Lieutenant Colonel Lewis W. Walt's 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, with Companies K and L of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines attached, discovered a strong enemy defensive position that included a maze of intricate bunkers extending along Aogiri Ridge. Walt, later a full general and the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, had his men attack the Japanese stronghold, but in an all-day fight they were unable to penetrate the enemy's defenses. By evening, however, the Americans through sheer tenacity gain-





USMC Photo 72290

Marines ford a Cape Gloucester stream while searching for a Japanese pillbox. The jungle terrain and torrential rains on New Britain added to the difficulties.



USMC Photo 77636

Members of the 7th Marines' regimental staff at Cape Gloucester are, left to right: Major Victor H. Steit, operations officer; Lieutenant Colonel Lewis B. Puller, executive officer; First Lieutenant Francis T. Farrell, intelligence officer; Major Thomas J. Cross, quartermaster; Captain R. T. Musselwhite, Jr., communications officer; First Lieutenant John J. Aubuchon, assistant operations officer.



USMC Photo 72616

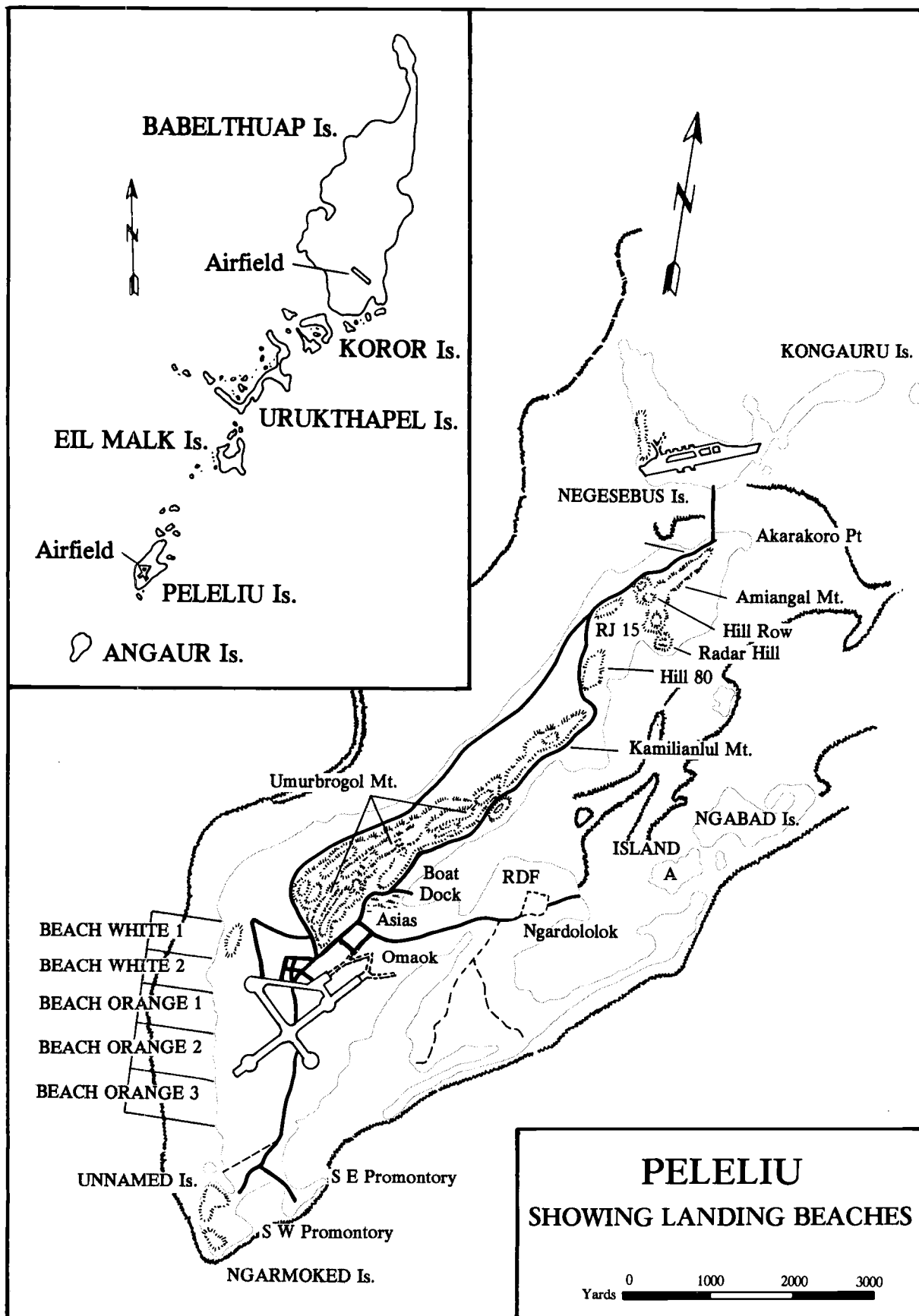
Senior officers of the 7th Marines in January 1944. From left to right: Lieutenant Colonel Odell M. Conoley, 2d Battalion; Lieutenant Colonel Lewis B. Puller, executive officer; Colonel Julian N. Frisbie, regimental commander; Lieutenant Colonel Henry W. Buse, Jr., 3d Battalion; Lieutenant Colonel John E. Weber, 1st Battalion; Captain Joseph W. Buckley, Weapons Company.

ed a foothold on the crest of the ridge. Japanese defenders, beginning at 0115 on 10 January, launched the first of five counterattacks against the Marines. The Leathernecks held in spite of the furious onslaughts. By dawn all the enemy reserves had been spent, forcing the Japanese to retreat. The ridge was permanently lost to the enemy as he had no further troops available for a new counterattack.³⁹

The only important enemy stronghold left in the area was on Hill 660. General Shepherd wanted the jungle-covered hill seized. He assigned this task to the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines which was now under Lieutenant Colonel Henry W. ("Bill") Buse, Jr., later chief of staff of the Marine Corps and commanding general, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. The battalion, supported by Weapons Company, 7th Marines, initiated a number of sorties over the next 2 days that probed enemy positions on the hill. Then, a dramatic rush to the top through a heavy downpour occurred on 14 January 1944. The sudden surge took the Japanese completely by surprise. The exhausted and rainsoaked Marines dug in on the crest and waited for the expected counterattack. The anticipated thrust came before sunrise on the 16th. Although vicious at times the fighting did not last long. Buse's skillful use of available firepower wrought devastating and lethal

destruction upon the attacking force. Buse received the Silver Star for the capture of the hill. The repulse of the enemy on Hill 660 marked the end of organized resistance in the Cape Gloucester-Borgen Bay area. In this phase of the New Britain Campaign, the 7th Marines and the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines plus supporting units had borne the brunt of the heaviest fighting in a region that contained some of the most difficult jungle territory in the world—territory made even less passable by torrential rains and the resulting mud. Colonel Frisbie received the Navy Cross for his leadership during this part of campaign.⁴⁰

Marine operations in western New Britain immediately following the successful push to Hill 660 were in the form of extensive patrolling missions to seek out the elusive Japanese. The enemy in his retreat hoped to reach Rabaul on the opposite end of the island. The 7th Marines thus received a new mission—the destruction of the fleeing enemy troops. The regiment had this responsibility until the end of February when it was then ordered to participate in the defense of the Cape Gloucester airstrip against Japanese stragglers. All combat-associated activity for the regiment and for the division ended in the latter part of April. The number of enemy killed by the division was estimated at 4,000 while the Marines lost ap-





USMC Photo 72081

A Marine fires a Thompson submachine gun into a Japanese pillbox before venturing inside. Members of the 7th Marines probed enemy positions on Hill 660 in January 1944.

proximately 1,300 men killed and wounded. The Army's 40th Infantry Division relieved the 1st Marine Division of its duties on the island and the Marines withdrew to Pavuvu in the Russell Islands. Arrival of the 7th Marines occurred in early May.⁴¹ Pavuvu was considerably less than ideal as a site for a unit to obtain the rest and recuperation required after months in a jungle environment. There the men found mud and more mud plus the ever incessant tropical heat. To make matters worse the island was infested with rats and land crabs. Adversities and illness, especially malaria, continued to afflict the troops as they had on New Britain. Hardship notwithstanding, the 1st Marine Division reorganized and reequipped itself and prepared for the next campaign.

Peleliu

Operation Stalemate, code name for the seizure of the Palaus, got underway in September 1944. The III Amphibious Corps (III AC) under Major General Roy S. Geiger* had the responsibility of taking the islands.

*Geiger, a pioneer in Marine aviation, commanded a Marine squadron in France during World War I and won a Navy Cross during his tour there. He also commanded a squadron in Haiti in 1920.

General Geiger in June had detached a provisional planning staff from III AC to plan the operation. The group was sent to Pearl Harbor and received the designation X-Ray Provisional Amphibious Corps. Major General Julian C. Smith, the deputy commander of the V Amphibious Corps, was placed in charge. The Palaus were Japan's main bastion in the western Carolines and only 530 miles east of Mindanao in the Philippines. Justification for the operation came from General Douglas MacArthur, supreme commander of Allied Forces in the Southwest Pacific. He believed that no invasion of the Philippines could succeed unless the potential enemy threat from the Palaus was eliminated. The Japanese there represented a real danger to his lines of communication that could not be overlooked. Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, commander in chief, Pacific Fleet, added another justification: the need to secure a base where American forces could support MacArthur's operations into the southern Philippines.

American planners focused their attention on taking the southernmost islands—Peleliu and Angaur. The task of capturing Peleliu with its important airfield fell to the 1st Marine Division still commanded by Major General Rupertus, who was to receive the Distinguished Service Medal for the campaign.⁴² Peleliu contained extensive defenses, and its fortifications included both antitank and antiboat guns in reinforced pillboxes, minefields, barbed wire, and antitank



USMC Photo 94937

Members of the 1st Marine Division take cover on Orange Beach 3 at Peleliu. Amphibious tractors hit while carrying the Leathernecks ashore burn in the background.

obstacles. The Umurbrogol Ridge which dominated Peleliu was the key to the enemy defense set up. The ridge was masked by dense jungle and honeycombed with caves and tunnels, some natural and some man-made. In addition, the Japanese had effectively constructed exits, firing ports, and artillery positions in the ridge's hard coral limestone. The enemy's defenses, as it soon became apparent, had been made practically impervious to naval and air bombardment. The Navy felt its bombardment was more than sufficient. Years later General Gerald C. Thomas,* former Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, summed up the attitude of one of the naval commanders at Peleliu: "They're [the Japanese] all dead, go on ashore and take over the island. We fired all these guns and they're all dead, now you just go over and occupy the area."⁴³

The campaign began early on 15 September 1944 with the 1st Marine Division poised to strike at the southwest coast of the island. Shortly after dawn the troops clambered on board LVTs (Landing Vehicle, Tracked). The amphibious tractors began moving toward the beach at approximately 0800. Less than 40 minutes later, the first waves of infantry landed and rapidly fanned out over the coral sands. The 1st Marines assaulted the northern sector. The 5th Marines were in the center. The 7th Marines, less the 2d Battalion which was in reserve, landed in the

southern zone of the beachhead. Colonel Herman H. Hanneken, former commanding officer of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, now commanded the regiment in what would prove to be its most difficult campaign up to that time.⁴⁴

Even before its units reached the shore the regiment came up against heavy enemy fire—a foretaste of what was to come. Intense antboat, mortar, and machinegun fire raked the 7th Marines as the landing craft churned through the surf. The resulting confusion due to the enemy's enfilade fire caused elements of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines to mistakenly land in the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines' zone. Once the beachhead had been established, heavy fighting delayed the taking of the 7th's first day objectives. Major (later Brigadier General) Edward H. Hurst's 3d Battalion, 7th Marines had a particularly hard time against Japanese soldiers stubbornly resisting from caves and blockhouses. Hurst personally led his men in attacks on the enemy which by the next day resulted in the annihilation of one reinforced battalion of approximately 1,600 men. Major Hurst was subsequently awarded a Silver Star for his leadership in eliminating this Japanese unit.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, forward progress on D-day ended early that evening with the men directed to prepare a defensive perimeter. The beachhead held by the 1st Division was 3,000 yards in length and averaged 500 yards in depth with one maximum penetration of 1,500 yards. Several counterattacks hit the perimeter that night with the Japanese launching their strongest attack against the lines of Company C, 1st Battalion,

*In 1944 Brigadier General Thomas was the director of Division of Plans and Policies at Headquarters, Marine Corps. Previously he had been chief of staff of the 1st Division.



USMC Photo 95787

Colonel Herman H. Hanneken, who won early fame as a captain in the Garde d' Haiti, took command of the regiment on New Britain and led it through the assault on Peleliu.

7th Marines. Four hours of fighting ensued; the Japanese finally broke contact at 0600. The attempt at a breakthrough had failed, although some enemy soldiers had succeeded in penetrating a few forward positions before they were repulsed.

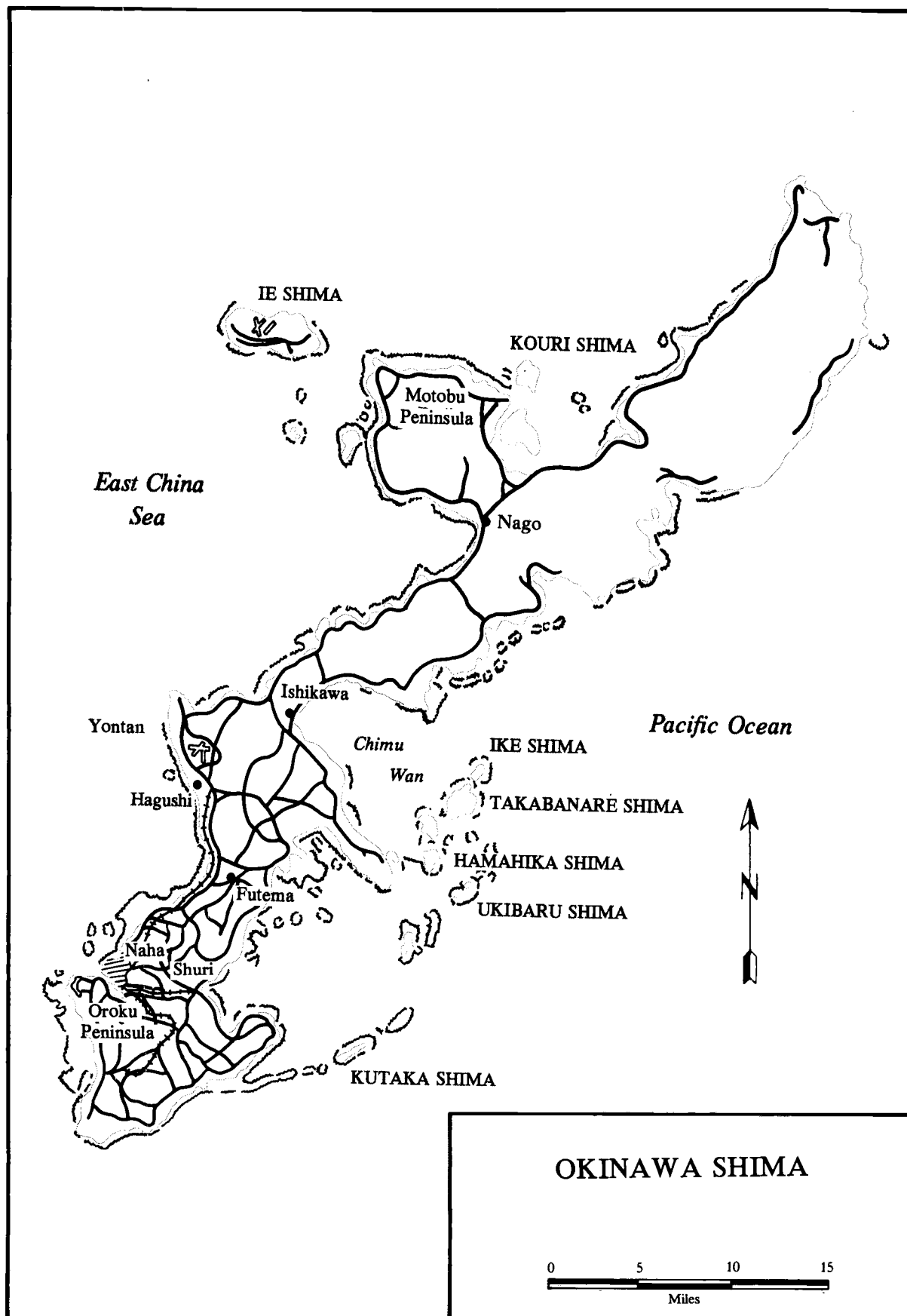
A new regimental drive to secure the southern tip of the island got underway on D-plus-1. This sweep lasted until the afternoon of the 18th when the 7th Marines reported to division headquarters that the area had indeed been seized. Private First Class Arthur J. Jackson of the 3d Battalion contributed immeasurably to the regiment's success. On the 18th, he virtually became a one-man assault force in storming one enemy gun position after another. Jackson succeeded in personally wiping out 12 pillboxes and killing 50 Japanese soldiers. He was subsequently awarded the Medal of Honor.⁴⁷ In the first 4 days of the Peleliu Campaign, the regiment, less its 2d Battalion, killed 2,609 of the enemy while suffering 47 dead, 414 wounded, and 36 missing in action. One well-trained enemy infantry battalion had been completely destroyed. The number of enemy casualties was indicative of the Japanese determination to fight to the death.⁴⁸

While most of the regiment was still locked in battle in the south, the 2d Battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel Spencer S. Berger, was put ashore and ordered north to assist the 1st Marines. When the unit moved into the line on 17 September 1944, the newly arrived Marines found the 1st Marines pressing an attack on a section of the Umurbrogol. The vicious battle had battered the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines to the degree that it had to be withdrawn and replaced by the 2d Bat-



USMC Photo 95771

The 3d Battalion, 7th Marines moves to the front lines of Peleliu. A regimental drive to secure the southern end of the island began on D-plus-1.





USMC Photo 302307

Second Lieutenant Arthur J. Jackson was a private first class when he won the Medal of Honor on Peleliu.

talion, 7th Marines. The assault continued with little ground gained, yet the cost to the Americans remained high. In one furious exchange of hand grenades Private First Class Charles H. Roan saved four of his comrades by jumping on a grenade that land in their midst. Posthumously, he was awarded the Medal of Honor. The rest of the regiment redeployed to the Umurbrogol and joined in the attack on the 20th. The 2d Battalion subsequently went into reserve. No forward progress occurred even with the addition of two new battalions. Frontal assaults were of little avail. The Japanese could not be dislodged. Fighting remained bloody and arduous, and it was made more difficult by the precipitous terrain. The Umurbrogol appeared to be impregnable as the advance ground to a halt.⁴⁹

Another posthumous Medal of Honor was awarded to a member of the 2d Battalion during a battle that occurred on 25 September. Private First Class John D. New and two other men from Company F were directing mortar fire on enemy positions when a Japanese grenade landed in their midst. New flung himself onto it and absorbed the full impact of the explosion that followed, thus saving the lives of his companions. A similar instance of unselfish valor occurred a few days later. Private Wesley Phelps of Company K, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines saved the life of a fellow

Marine when he jumped on a Japanese grenade that had been thrown into their foxhole. His award was also posthumous.

A new drive was ordered with fresh Army troops from the 81st Infantry Division being brought up for added muscle. Units from this division had just succeeded in seizing Angaur, an island about 10 miles south of Peleliu. The Japanese stubbornly resisted the latest attempt at overwhelming the Umurbrogol, although other enemy-held areas on Peleliu had been taken by United States forces. The Umurbrogol pocket had only been made smaller, not eliminated. By the end of September, the entire island was in American hands and all that remained was the reduction of the Japanese-dominated ridge.⁵⁰ General Rupertus again ordered another attack. It was scheduled for the 30th with the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 7th Marines spearheading the assault. Before it could be launched enemy troops struck the lines of the 7th Marines on the proceeding night. The enemy attack came during a heavy rainstorm and resulted in much confusion and in a number of casualties, but it did not delay plans for 30 September.

The 7th's drive began on time with both battalions making some rather substantial gains. The advance



USMC Photo 96873

Men of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines traverse the rocky ground of the Umurbrogol. This Japanese-dominated ridge was the last area on Peleliu to fall to the Americans.

forced the Japanese to withdraw from a number of defensive positions and enabled the Americans to capture one mountain gun and knock out several machinegun emplacements. Considerable sniper and harassing fire in the meantime took a heavy toll on the rest of the regiment which had remained stationary in the forward area. As the day wore on resistance stiffened. The two assaulting battalions often had to engage in hand-to-hand combat. Hand grenades, flamethrowers, and high explosives were employed to root out the enemy from his caves. Marine losses mounted as the battle raged. Recurring illnesses, especially dysentery, and casualties depleted the ranks of both the 1st and 3d Battalions. At the end of the day Lieutenant Colonel John J. Gormley's 1st Battalion had an effective strength of only 90 men. The 3d Battalion's combat efficiency was placed at less than 50 percent. The momentum of the attack could not long be sustained with the loss of so many men.

The spent 1st Battalion moved to the rear while the 2d Battalion was brought up. Renewal of the drive on the Umurbrogol began on the morning of 3 October with Company G jumping off first. It advanced for rapidly towards its objective—Walt Ridge, named for Lieutenant Colonel Lewis W. Walt, then the executive officer of the 5th Marines. Once Company G gained a foothold on the ridge the enemy opened up with a heavy volume of fire. The rest of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines followed by the 3d Battalion rushed forward to assist Company G. Although temporarily pinned down, units of the 2d Battalion were able to push their way over the crest by late afternoon. Dogged enemy resistance forced a halt to the drive at nightfall. Elements of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines eventually

deployed to the front to reinforce those units already on the crest. Casualties for the day mounted to over 100 for the regiment.

Most of the next day was spent in consolidating newly won ground and in mopping-up operations. In one such maneuver a platoon from Company L, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines moved to seize Hill 120 near Baldy Ridge, an enemy fortified position. After the Marines had occupied their objectives, the Japanese unleashed a murderous barrage from the security of Baldy. The men attempted to withdraw but were cut off by heavy shelling from enemy mortars and cannons. Withering fire took a devastating toll. Below the scene of the battle the rest of Company L stood helpless. Attempts at rescuing the trapped Marines proved fruitless—and costly. Captain James V. Shanley, the commanding officer, in trying to recover an injured rifleman was hit by mortar shell fragments and fell mortally wounded. Second Lieutenant Ralph H. Stadler rushed to his aid but was killed as he ran across open ground. Shanley was posthumously awarded his second Navy Cross; his first had come for valorous conduct in the battle for Hill 660 on New Britain. Of the 48 men who were on Hill 120 only 11 made it to safety and just 5 emerged unscathed. The battalion could only look upon this engagement as a tragedy. The entire regiment, in fact, had suffered severe losses throughout the campaign. Following the near calamity on Hill 120, the 7th Marines was relieved by the 5th Marines. At this point it simply could not function effectively as a combat organization on a regimental scale.³¹

Elements of the regiment came back into the line in mid-October 1944 to participate in yet another at-



USMC Photo 94709

Senior officers of the 7th Marines during Peleliu are shown (left to right): Major E. Hunter Hurst, commanding officer, 3d Battalion; Lieutenant Colonel Norman Hussa, regimental executive officer; Colonel Herman H. Hanneken, regimental commander; Lieutenant Colonel Spencer S. Berger, commanding officer, 2d Battalion; and Lieutenant Colonel John J. Gormley, commanding officer, 1st Battalion.

tempt at reducing the Umurbrogol pocket. The 1st Battalion came up on the 14th and remained engaged in operations for 3 days when it was then relieved by the Army's 1st Battalion, 321st Infantry Regiment. Headquarters and Weapons Companies remained behind the lines and were employed as a defensive force for the island's airfield. The 2d Battalion was assigned to patrolling operations on the islands northeast of Peleliu. On 17 October, elements of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines were dispatched to the Umurbrogol and a rather costly battle ensued. This turned out to be the last engagement of the campaign for a unit of the 7th Marines. On 20 October the 81st Infantry Division took over all responsibility for continuing operations against the diehard enemy units. The 1st Marine Division stood down and all elements of the 7th Marines except the 3d Battalion left for Pavuvu on the 22d. The remaining battalion redeployed on 30 October.³²

Although the bloody battle for Peleliu was over for the 7th Marines and the 1st Marine Division, it continued for the Army until 27 November 1944 when the last fortified enemy stronghold was overrun. Even then, fighting did not end as small skirmishes between American troops and Japanese soldiers occurred for many weeks after the official termination of organized resistance.³³ The capture of Peleliu brought to a close one of the hardest-fought battles in the Pacific War and one of the most costly. Almost 10,400 casualties were incurred by the Marine Corps, Army, and Navy during the campaign. Of this figure the 7th Marines suffered nearly 1,500 battle losses.³⁴

Okinawa

After filling its thinned ranks with replacements, the 7th Marines began preparing for its role in Operation Iceberg, the invasion of Okinawa. The 1st Marine Division in January 1945 began rotating its infantry regiments to Guadalcanal to conduct training exercises since rat-infested Pavuvu was too small for such maneuvers. The division was now commanded by Major General Pedro A. del Valle, an artillery officer who had commanded the 11th Marines on Guadalcanal. The division was slated to participate in the assault on Okinawa as an integral part of a much larger force. As a result, it had to face new problems of control and coordination with which it had no previous experience. The 1st and 6th Marine Divisions were the main units of the III Amphibious Corps which itself formed a major element of the Tenth Army, the



USMC Photo 116425

Marines land unopposed on Okinawa. They encountered little resistance in the first days and objectives were taken well ahead of schedule.

organization responsible for the seizure of Okinawa. Command of this huge force was given to Army Lieutenant General Simon B. Buckner who was subsequently killed* by hostile fire during the closing days of the campaign.

The principal reason for undertaking the Okinawa invasion was obvious—the island's proximity to Japan. It lay only 350 miles away. Numerous sites for air and naval bases existed on the island. In American hands Okinawa could be turned into a veritable bastion from which the United States could strike with impunity at the heartland of the Japanese Empire. Additionally, it afforded the United States a potential staging area for a future amphibious invasion of the Japanese home islands.

Training for the operation ended in early March 1945. By mid-March, units of the invasion force had assembled and were proceeding to the objective. L-day, the day of the assault, was set for Easter Sunday which fell on 1 April that year. Plans called for the landing to take place on the southwestern side of the island.³⁵ The two divisions of the III Amphibious Corps were

*Upon the death of General Buckner, command of the Tenth Army fell to Lieutenant General Roy S. Geiger who initially commanded the III Amphibious Corps during the struggle for Okinawa. This was the first time a Marine general commanded an American field army.



USMC Photo 108714

Colonel Edward W. Snedeker, later lieutenant general, commanded the 7th Marines before and during the assault on Okinawa.

scheduled to land abreast on the beaches north of the town of Hagushi; to the south two divisions of the Army's XXIV Corps would come ashore. The 1st Division after landing would assist the 6th Division in capturing Yontan airfield before striking inland. The first assault waves began making their way to the beaches shortly after 0800. In the vanguard were the armored amphibian tractors followed closely by the troop-carrying LVTs. Among the first Marine units to land were the 1st and 2d Battalions, 7th Marines. Much to the surprise of the Americans only slight enemy resistance was encountered. Advancing Marines made

rapid progress. Consequently, the 3d Battalion, which had been in reserve, was put ashore and joined the movement inland.³⁶ Objectives were taken ahead of schedule. For example, Colonel (later Lieutenant General and Commandant of the Marine Corps Schools) Edward W. Snedeker's 7th Marines was able to reach the east coast late on 3 April. Although the men met some moderate opposition, fighting did not seriously impede their progress. Rugged terrain and poor roads caused the most difficulty. Spearheading the drive was the 3d Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel Hurst which had the honor of being the first Marine unit to make it to the opposite side of the island. Okinawa had thus effectively been cut in two. The 2d Battalion, still commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Berger, followed by the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John J. Gormley, went into reserve after reaching the coast on the 4th. The 3d Battalion, 7th Marines continued to be deployed along the front to the north but attached to the 5th Marines. For the rest of April, the 7th Marines primarily occupied itself with patrolling operations in the rugged hills that lay behind the lines as the 6th Division cleared Motobu Peninsula and the northern end of the island and the Army XXIV Corps attacked to the south. It had the mission of destroying small bands of enemy that had been bypassed in the advance on the north.³⁷

The 1st Marine Division on 1 May redeployed south to assist the Army's XXIV Corps in its advance. The 7th Marines, the last major unit of the division to transfer to the new theater of battle, completed its redeployment on 2 May. Progress against the enemy in the south had been halted at the Shuri Line, a strong network of Japanese defenses. The Army's repeated attempts at breaching the enemy's for-



USMC Photo 116632

Marines, including one equipped with a flamethrower, climb a stone wall as they drive across Okinawa. The 7th Marines reached the east coast on 3 April.



USMC Photo 121760

A machinegun opens up on an enemy position. Marine units moved to southern Okinawa after organized resistance ceased in the north.

tifications proved futile. General Buckner called for another effort but felt a breakthrough would require reinforcements. Both Marine divisions, therefore, shifted their zones of operation to southern Okinawa. Most Marine units were free to move since organized resistance in the north had ended on 21 April.⁵⁸

The 1st Division maneuvered into assault positions opposite the Dakeshi-Awacha hill complex, a heavily defended section of the Shuri Line. A new attack was launched by the Tenth Army in early May. Murderous fire slowed the 1st Marine Division's advance on the Shuri Line. The 7th Marines, however, did gain a firm hold on Dakeshi Ridge. The assault started on the morning of 11 May 1945. Prior to the 7th Marines' push, the Japanese unleashed a fusillade of mortar and machinegun fire on the 3d Battalion's positions. A foolhardy charge by the enemy followed. Division artillery opened up on the onrushing soldiers while the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines hurried to render support. The two battalions with artillery assistance beat back the attack and inflicted many casualties on the attackers. The 7th Marines subsequently went ahead with its own attack which started on schedule. Although weakened by their thrust, the Japanese remained capable of offering vigorous resistance to the American assault. The 1st and 2d Battalions, especially, found the going difficult, but the regiment by sheer

determination forced its way onto the ridge by nightfall.

Considerable credit for the regiment's success was given to Lieutenant Colonel James M. Masters, Sr., the 7th Marines' executive officer. Masters, who later became a lieutenant general and commandant of Marine Corps Schools, established an advanced observation post in the only possible position—on the frontlines. From there he observed and helped direct the attack. He continued to man the post, in spite of intense enemy mortar and small arms fire, and to report information vital to the capture of the desperately defended Dakeshi Ridge. He was awarded a Navy Cross for his efforts. A seesaw battle for control of the ridge raged on 12 May. The fighting was so violent that it brought back memories of the battles of Peleliu. Dakeshi Ridge was finally secured on the 13th.⁵⁹ The enemy apparently had remained determined to fight to the last man, because he held out for nearly the whole day despite the employment by the Marines of tanks, self-propelled 75mm guns, and 37mm antitank guns.⁶⁰

Company E, following the seizure of Dakeshi Ridge, sent a platoon towards Wana Ridge but forward movement was halted by the enemy. The Marines had to pull back to Dakeshi Ridge for the night. The 1st and 2d Battalions rested and reorganized during the next 3

days. Mopping-up operations also occurred, but no offensive engagements were ordered because of the weakened condition of both units. The 3d Battalion on the 17th relieved the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines since it could only muster a single company of effectives. On 17 May the 3d Battalion pressed the attack up Wana Ridge, but its ranks were thinned by a heavy volume of enemy fire. Lieutenant Colonel Hurst, the battalion commander, received a Navy Cross for assisting in the evacuation of a wounded man over a path swept by Japanese small arms fire. Bloodied and battered, the battalion was in turn relieved on 19 May by the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines. In 4 days of fighting Hurst's unit lost 12 officers, producing a severe shortage of leadership in the battalion. Equally as important was the painful fact that the entire regiment had sustained approximately 1,250 casualties from all causes between 10 and 19 May.⁶¹

The regiment stayed in reserve during near constant rain until 2 June 1945. A few days earlier, Japanese defenses along the Shuri Line crumpled with enemy units retreating to the island's southern tip for what looked like a last-ditch stand. The 7th Marines moved up to the front near Naha, the capital, and into positions previously occupied by elements of the 22d and 29th Marines, regiments of the 6th Division. The 2d Battalion, 7th Marines immediately crossed the Kokuba River and encountered a small Japanese force which was quickly brushed aside.⁶² Once the regiment established itself on the south bank of the river, its commanding officer, Colonel Snedeker, ordered his men to storm nearby hostile emplacements. Snedeker's goal was to close the neck of the Oroku Peninsula south of Naha, thus entrapping Japanese forces that had withdrawn there. Units of the 6th Marine Division in the meantime launched a direct assault on the peninsula itself. This coordinated operation resulted in the annihilation of practically all enemy soldiers on the peninsula. The 1st Division ordered another major advance upon completion of the bottling up of the Japanese on Okoku. Marine units were directed to push south and west toward the sea. Rain, mud, and rough terrain slowed the drive, but the Marines nevertheless reached the coast on 7 June. This resulted in the opening of a new supply route for the division. It now could be easily supplied by sea rather than by the arduous overland route. Dependence upon hazardous air drops was also eliminated.

The division next made a stab at the Itoman-Tera area. The 1st Battalion, 7th Marines initiated two at-

tempts at seizing high ground overlooking Tera but both failed. Concurrently, the 2d Battalion struck at enemy positions in the vicinity of Itoman. The next day, 10 June, the unit crashed through Japanese defenses and swept beyond the southern edge of the town. Success did not come without a price—five battalion officers were hit by enemy fire in the first 7 minutes of fighting. The 1st Battalion, aided by an artillery barrage, meanwhile seized its objective of the previous day.⁶³

The offensive continued with both battalions turning their attention to Kunishi Ridge, a heavily defended coral escarpment. On 11 June, the 2d Battalion pushed out from Itoman while the 1st Battalion started a drive from Tera. The frontal attack was quickly halted by accurate small arms fire and concentrated artillery and mortar volleys. Colonel Snedeker ordered a night assault to avoid needless casualties. Companies E and F moved out early on the 12th while it was still dark. The Americans surprised the Japanese and reached the crest of the ridge. A counterattack temporarily cut the companies off from the rest of the regiment. Reinforcing units with tank support forced their way onto the heights, but intense fire from the defenders thwarted the seizure of the ridge. The enemy was so well entrenched that the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines came up to assist in breaking the will of the Japanese to resist. The 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, which had been in division reserve, also joined in the operation. Forward progress continued to be slow as Japanese opposition did not abate in spite of increased pressure. Naval gunfire had to be employed to destroy pockets of die-hard holdouts. The tired 7th Marines finally withdrew from the battle on the 18th as the fighting drew to a close. Its place was taken by the 8th Marines, a fresh unit from the 2d Marine Division. Colonel Snedeker eventually received the Navy Cross for leading his regiment through the last stages of the Okinawa campaign, including the successful penetration of hostile defenses on Kunishi Ridge.

Combat did not cease altogether for the 7th Marines even though it had been pulled back from the frontlines. Enemy snipers were active in its area causing a number of Marine casualties. In one encounter a concealed Japanese rifleman wounded Lieutenant Colonel Hurst in the neck. The 28-year-old battalion commander had to be evacuated and the command of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines passed to Lieutenant Colonel Stephen V. Sabol on 19 June. Organized resistance ended 2 days later and the 7th Marines

redeployed north to the Motobu Peninsula for rest and rehabilitation.⁶⁴ Enemy casualties were extraordinarily high during the struggle for Okinawa. No exact toll has been tabulated, but various estimates have placed Japanese dead at well over 100,000. Unfortunately, many of these were civilians. American forces also paid a heavy price: 12,000 killed and over 36,600 wounded. All hostilities in the Pacific ended on 15 August, and the Second World War officially was concluded on 2 September 1945 when Japan formally surrendered to the Allies in Tokyo Bay.

North China Intervention and Occupation

As part of the 1st Marine Division, the 7th Marines had slogged its way through four rough, gruelling campaigns. The regiment had seen some of the toughest and bloodiest fighting of the war. With the war over the Marines felt relieved in knowing that they would not have to face the prospect of another battle. They expected an immediate return home, but this did not prove to be the case. Shortly after the surrender of Japan, the 1st Marine Division received orders to transfer to China.

Japanese forces in large numbers held vast sections

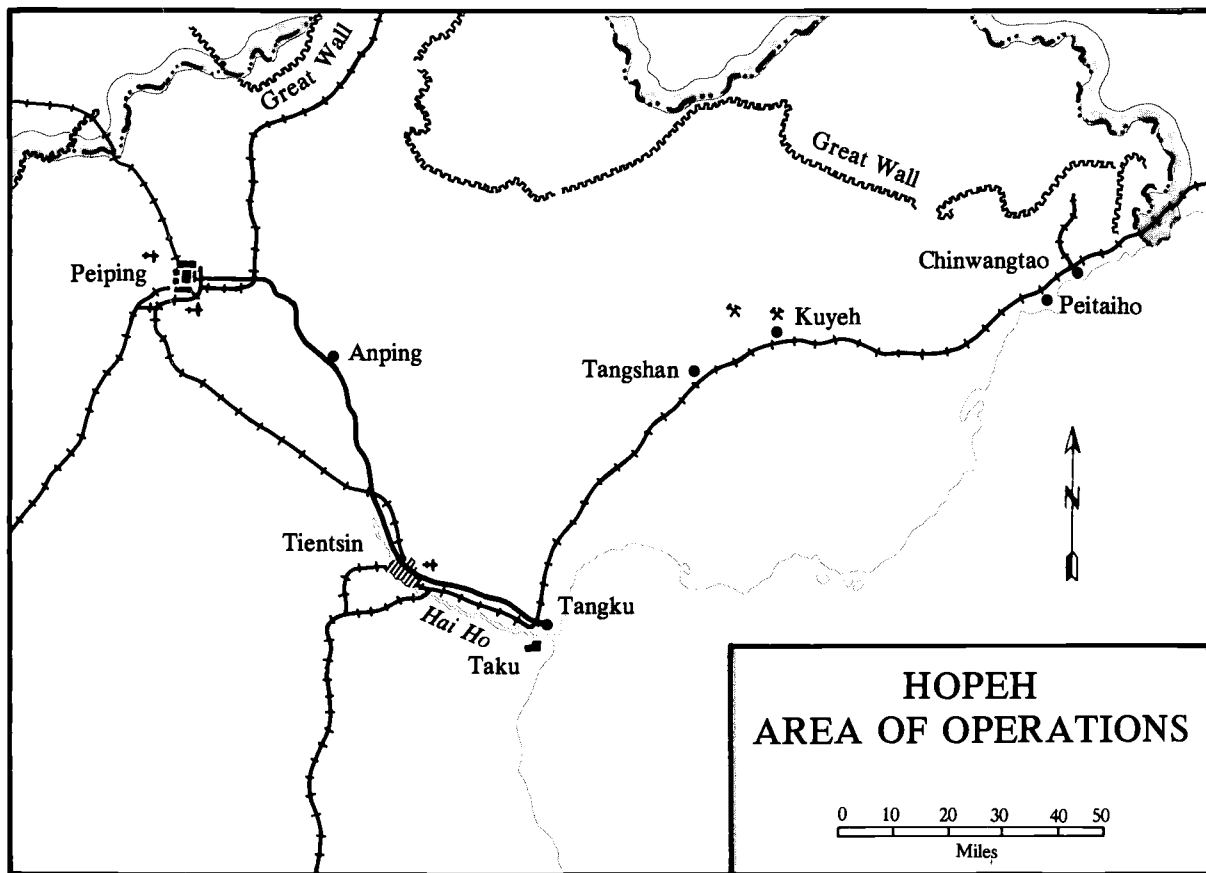
of North China. The Chinese Nationalist Government, having no readily available troops to relieve the Japanese, agreed to the continued use of former enemy units in garrisoning the area until Allied forces could take over the responsibility. The Nationalists thought that the agreement would prevent their old enemy, the Communists, from seizing the area. The American Government approved of such an arrangement and also agreed to send its own forces to aid the Nationalists in reoccupying the region. In some circles there had been worry over possible encroachments by the Soviet Union in North China if a vacuum was created there. Soviet armies had already taken Manchuria from the Japanese and their puppet supporters. The United States in the view of many, therefore, had a number of justifiable reasons for sending thousands of its troops to North China. Its goals there were: (1) to disarm and to accept the surrender of enemy troops including local native units allied to the Japanese; (2) to assist the Nationalists in reasserting their suzerainty over the area and thus prevent a forcible Communist takeover; and (3) to act as a barrier against Soviet imperialism.⁶⁵

The III Amphibious Corps was selected as the best suited organization for duty in China. Corps Headquarters, Corps Troops, and the 1st Marine Division went to Hopeh Province while the 6th Marine Divi-



USMC Photo 225046

Marines parade through the main street of Tientsin, China. Crowds line the street carrying the flags of both nations.



sion, less the 4th Marines, deployed to Shantung Province. Both divisions were supported by units of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing based on airfields in the two provinces. First Marine Division units had instructions to occupy positions in and around the cities of Tangku, Tientsin, Peiping, and Chinwangtao. Initial orders directed the Marines to accept the surrender of Japanese forces and their native auxiliaries and to supervise the repatriation of enemy military and civilian personnel.⁶⁶ The 7th Marines left Okinawa on 26 September and arrived and disembarked at Tangku 4 days later. For its new commanding officer, Colonel Richard P. Ross, it was a second tour in China. As a young officer he had been assigned to the Legation Guard in Peiping between 1929-1932.

Upon arrival, the 1st Battalion received further orders sending the unit to Chinwangtao on 1 October. There the battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel Gormley, succeeded in bringing to an end the fighting that sporadically erupted between the Communists on one side and the Japanese and their Chinese allies on the other. Originally, the regiment was dispersed to the following localities: Tientsin, Chinwangtao, Tangku, and Tangshan.⁶⁷ Although technically the

fighting had stopped in China, Marines did not come to view their assignment there as one normally associated with a peacetime garrison force. They were instructed to prepare for any eventuality including combat with hostile units. And on occasions fighting did break out between Marines and Communist Chinese soldiers.

Late in October 1945, the 7th Marines received responsibility for guarding the vital rail line between Tangku and Chinwangtao. Protection of the coal mines at Tangshan also came under the jurisdiction of the regiment. In conjunction with the safeguarding of the railroad, detachments were placed along the route in fixed positions—the most common being bridges and train stations. Their mission was to make sure that rail traffic, especially coal destined for Shanghai, moved uninterrupted along the line.⁶⁸ The regiment remained occupied in this task for nearly 6 months. Often the outpost units were little more than the size of an average infantry squad. The duty was lonely and dangerous with the men not having, at least initially, adequate quarters, clothing, or rations to endure the harsh winter of North China. Meanwhile, the political-military situation in the country continued to



USMC Photo 226307

A machinegun crew guards a train on the Tientsin-Chinwangtao Railroad. This railroad was vital to the Leathernecks who were assisting in the disarmament and evacuation of Japanese forces in the area.

deteriorate. Open warfare flared between the Nationalists and the Communists. Simultaneously, pressure was mounting in the United States to demobilize its huge military machine and to withdraw from China. By early spring 1946, the Japanese repatriation program was almost complete. The American Government, taking all these factors into consideration, decided to reorganize its forces in North China. Deactivation of certain Marine units and the transfer of their personnel to the United States then followed. Lieutenant Colonel Sabol's 3d Battalion, 7th Marines was one organization selected for deactivation. Disbandment occurred on 15 April 1946 at the Chinese town of Peitaiho after the battalion had moved there from Tangshan.⁶⁹

The uneasy relations that existed between the Marines and Communist guerrillas grew worse during July 1946. On the 13th, eight men from the 7th Marines who had been guarding a bridge near Peitaiho left to search for ice in a nearby village. The men wanted to use the ice to help alleviate the blistering heat of the hot summer day. However, going to the village was a violation of a division directive against leaving a defensive position. The Marines found no ice; instead, all were captured by Communist troops.

One man did escape and alerted the regimental headquarters. Combat patrols from the 1st and 2d Battalion, 7th Marines fanned out through the countryside in pursuit of the Communists. All traces of the guerrilla band and its captives had vanished. Negotiations with the Communists eventually led to an early release of the men on 24 July. Five days after their capture, a much more serious incident took place. On this occasion a convoy was ambushed near Anping between Peiping and Tientsin. The attack resulted in 4 dead and 10 wounded, all from the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines.⁷⁰

Withdrawal of Marines from China extended into 1947 with Colonel Paul Drake's 7th Marines being one of the first units ordered home that year. The entire regiment transferred to Chinwangtao and boarded the transports USS *Bollinger* (APA 234) and *Chilton* (APA 38). Sailing took place on the 3d and 5th of January 1947 with arrival in San Diego coming approximately 3 weeks later. Relocation to nearby Camp Pendleton followed with the regiment being attached to the 3d Marine Brigade. Demobilization plans called for the deactivation of the 7th Marines soon after its return to the United States. Weapons Company was deactivated on 19 February 1947. The 2d Battalion

followed a week later. In March, the 1st Battalion was deactivated on the 5th, while Headquarters Company went out of existence on the following day.⁷¹

The regiment's postwar inactive status did not endure for long. A major reorganization of units in the Marine Corps that fall led to the reestablishment of the 7th Marines. It was reborn at Camp Pendleton on 1 October but in an abbreviated state. Colonel Alva B. Lasswell was placed in command. The unit consisted only of Headquarters, A, B, and C Companies. Men of this battalion-size organization came from the 2d Battalion, 6th Marines. Subsequently, the new condensed version of the 7th Marines embarked upon a combat-training program. Its three lettered companies in April 1948 temporarily transferred to Barstow, California. The following January, all four companies received orders to deploy to Alaska for cold weather training. The 7th Marines loaded on board the transport USS *Bronx* (APA 236) at San Diego and sailed on 18 January 1949 for Kodiak. After a stay of less than a month, the unit returned to California.⁷²

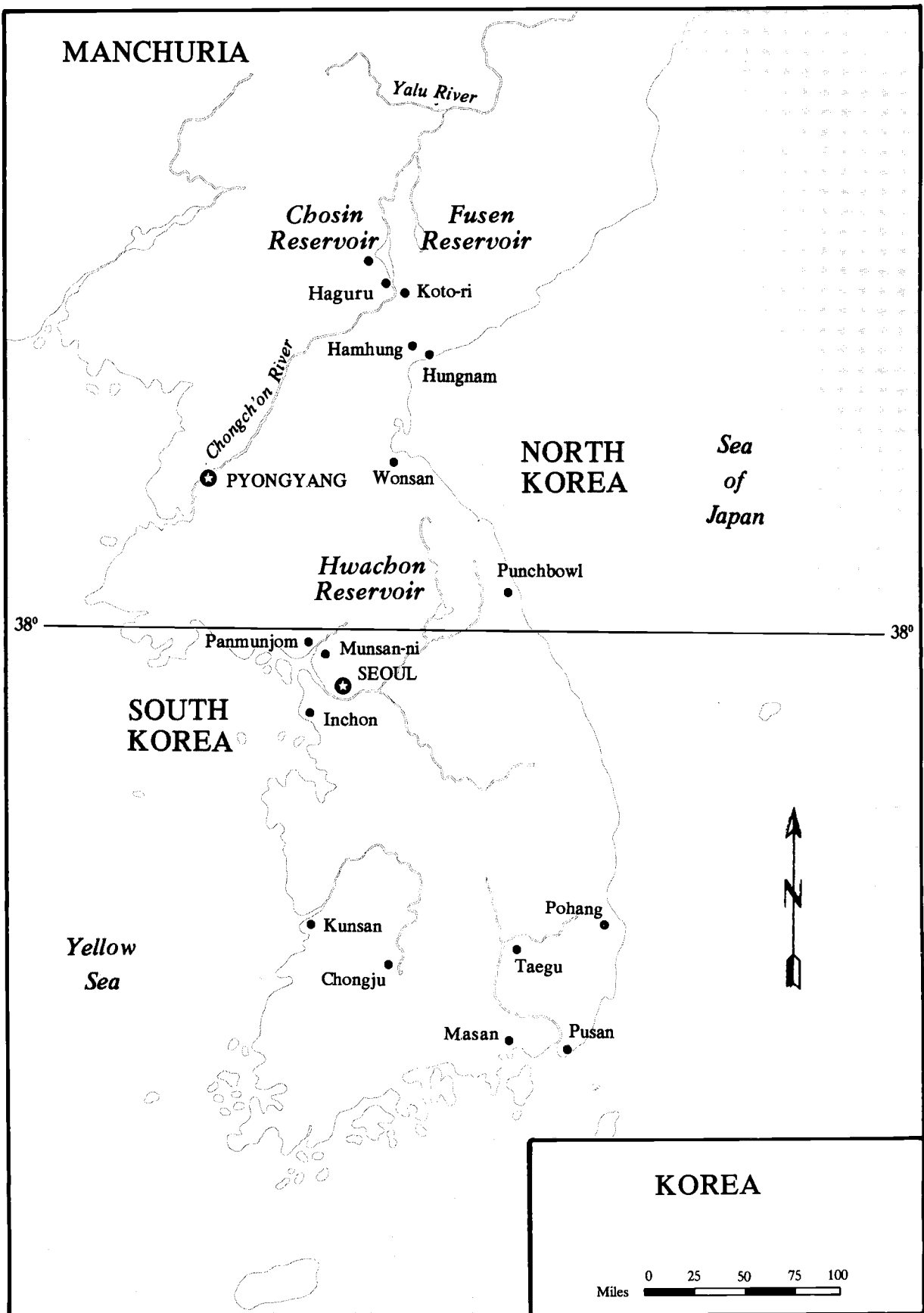
Within a few weeks of its completion of the Alaskan deployment, the 7th Marines was alerted for an emergency move to China. The last vestige of America's occupation of North China was in the process of being liquidated during spring 1949. Concern, however, over the security of the handful of remaining Americans in China mounted as the withdrawal concluded. A decision was made to send temporarily a battalion-size unit of infantry to China to ensure the safe departure of those military and civilian personnel still there. The 7th Marines thus received orders to sail to China to protect American citizens from possible attacks. Headquarters and Companies A and B embarked on board the heavy cruiser USS *St. Paul* (CA 73) at San Pedro, California and sailed on 22 April. Company C also left from the same port but on the light cruiser USS *Manchester* (CL 83).⁷³ By the time the two ships reached Pearl Harbor a new recommendation had been made. Instead of a battalion a rifle company was requested. Company C, as a result, was detached and sent on to the Far East. The rest of the unit returned to Camp Pendleton at the end of May after sailing to Alameda, California. Company C, commanded by Captain George E. Kittredge, Jr., moved to its destination without incident. It remained in Chinese and adjacent waters for 6 weeks, entering such ports as Tsingtao, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. The withdrawal of Americans was completed shortly after its arrival. Fortunately, no serious outbreak of attacks marred the exit.

Its task successfully terminated, Company C sailed from Chinese waters for Manila in the Philippines in the latter part of June. The company, accordingly, had the distinction of being the last element of the Fleet Marine Force to leave China. Its departure brought to a close a long and colorful chapter in Marine Corps History. The "China Marine" was no more. Company C, 7th Marines returned to Camp Pendleton on 16 July and rejoined its parent organization. Further reductions in Marine Corps strength led to another reorganization, which as a by-product saw the second postwar deactivation of the 7th Marines. It went into effect on 1 October 1949.⁷⁴

*Aggression in Korea—Return to Asia*⁷⁵

A new emergency arose in mid-1950 to precipitate the reactivation of the regiment. Early on 25 June, Marshal Choe Yong Gun, commanding the North Korean Army, unleashed a carefully planned attack across the 38th parallel, the dividing line between North and South Korea. The invasion came without justification or warning. The bulk of the invading force converged on Seoul, the capital of the Republic of Korea. Ignoring a United Nations resolution calling upon North Korea to cease its aggression, the North Korean Army pushed down the peninsula smashing South Korean defenders. President Harry S Truman announced on 27 June that he had ordered American air and naval forces to support the retreating South Korean (ROK) Army. The United Nations Security Council on the same day recommended that member nations furnish aid to the beleaguered South Koreans. President Truman 3 days later authorized the use of American ground troops in the war. American Army units shortly thereafter started crossing from Japan to Korea in an attempt to stem the invasion.⁷⁶

Marine ground forces were also soon committed. The first unit to enter the war-torn peninsula was the understrength 5th Marines, accompanied by Marine Aircraft Group 33. The initial landing took place at Pusan on 2 August 1950. Back in the United States the rest of the 1st Marine Division embarked on a hurried program of making itself ready for combat. It had to be brought up to wartime strength. The 7th Marines, consequently, was reborn at Camp Pendleton on 17 August 1950. Its structure paralleled that which existed during World War II—a headquarters element plus three battalions. Colonel Homer L. ("Litz the Blitz") Litzenberg, Jr., was assigned as





USMC Photo A3833

Colonel Homer L. Litzenberg, Jr., reactivated the regiment at Camp Pendleton on 17 August 1950 and led it through the first 8 months of the Korean War.

its commanding officer. Litzenberg, a former enlisted man, was eventually promoted to lieutenant general upon his retirement in 1959. All units of the regiment except the 3d Battalion were activated on the 17th. Personnel for the regiment came from a number of sources. The nucleus for the newly reformed unit came from men who had transferred from the 6th Marines at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Additionally, regular Marines from various posts and stations and reservists were assigned to the 7th Marines to bring the unit up to its authorized strength. In conjunction with this buildup, the 7th Marines received the largest proportion of reservists of any major unit in the 1st Marine Division—about 50 percent.

The 7th Marines sailed for Japan on 1 September 1950. In the meantime, the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines, which had been afloat in the Mediterranean Sea, received orders to deploy to the Far East. The battalion's personnel upon arrival at Kobe, Japan were used in the reconstitution of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines. Reactivation occurred on 11 September. Approximately a week later, the rest of the regiment assembled in Japan and the 3d Battalion joined its parent organization. Composition of the regiment at

this time was as follows: Headquarters and Service Company, 4.2-inch Mortar Company, Antitank Company, and three battalions each having a headquarters and service company, a weapons company, and three lettered companies.⁷⁷

On 15 September 1950, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, commander of all American armed forces in the Far East, directed the successful execution of a spectacular amphibious landing at Inchon on the west coast of the peninsula. The 1st Marine Division, which comprised the assault force, swept through Inchon and pushed on toward nearby Seoul. The 7th Marines, however, did not land with the assault force but was still preparing to move from Japan to Korea. The regiment along with the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, an artillery unit, went ashore at Inchon on 21 September. Eventually, it rejoined the division in the battle for Seoul. Responsibility for taking the city rested with the X Corps of the Eighth United States Army. The X Corps had been created specifically for the Inchon-Seoul operation. Its principal elements were the 1st Marine Division and the Army's 7th Infantry Division. Upon completion of the movement to Inchon, the 7th Marines was

ordered forward to take part in the advance on Seoul. Litzenberg's regiment soon moved to the front and was phased into the fight with the assignment of protecting the left flank of the American advance on the city. In due course it swung into positions northwest of Seoul to cut off enemy escape routes. On D-plus-8, Colonel Litzenberg ordered the 3d Battalion and the regimental headquarters to cross the Han River.

First contact with North Korean forces took place the next morning. The rest of the regiment moved into the line that afternoon. In fighting that ensued between 23 and 27 September, the 7th Marines claimed 375 enemy killed and 34 captured. Seoul was secured on the 29th but fighting continued. North Korean soldiers streamed northward in retreat with the Americans in hot pursuit. Capture of the important rail and road junction at nearby Uijongbu had been assigned to the 7th Marines. The drive, part of the last phase of the Inchon-Seoul operation, began on 1 October with the 1st Battalion making a broad feint to cover entry of other units into the town. Progress was moderate on the first day. A thrust by the 1st and 3d Battalions made little headway on the next day. On 3 October, Colonel Litzenberg issued orders for Major (later Brigadier General) Webb D. ("Buzz") Sawyer and his 2d Battalion to move forward to spearhead a new attack. The battalion, gaining momentum, over-

ran a number of enemy artillery positions. Resistance crumbled and the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines entered the ruined town at 1700. The foray had succeeded and ended in a smashing victory for the battalion since enemy defenders broke and retreated into North Korea.

Shortly after the taking of Uijongbu, the regiment moved to Inchon along with other units of the 1st Marine Division. The division had been ordered to reembark and to carry out a landing at Wonsan on the eastern coast of North Korea. Although the port was located in that portion of the peninsula that had been under the Communists since the end of World War II, American forces were authorized to enter the north to crush the aggressors once and for all. It should be noted that the 1st Marine Division was the only allied division specifically trained and equipped for amphibious warfare. This was the reason for its deployment to Wonsan. In fact, throughout the war, except for the period from May 1951 to March 1952, the division was positioned in areas near the coast in the event that an amphibious maneuver was required for either offensive or defensive purposes. By the time the Marines reached their destination the port was already in the hands of ROK units, and no amphibious assault was necessary. Even though Wonsan was in friendly hands, the Marine disembarkation was delayed for



USMC Photo A4525

The 7th Marines, with cold weather gear, press into Communist territory at the Chosin Reservoir. The regiment was supported by Marine air strikes as the advance continued.

nearly 2 weeks until the Navy completed the formidable task of clearing the harbor of mines. Elements of the division finally began coming ashore on 25 October. The 7th Marines landed the following day. Completion of the debarkation was followed by the division marching north to participate in a three-pronged drive to the Manchurian border. Two South Korean Army divisions and the United States Army's 7th Infantry Division were also slated for a role in the campaign.

The 7th Marines had been directed to go to Hamhung and then march north to relieve the 26th ROK Regiment which had reportedly been hit by Communist Chinese units. With the Americans and South Koreans rapidly forging ahead toward the Yalu River, Communist China became apprehensive over the prospect of a hostile force encamped on its Manchurian frontier. The Chinese felt this was too much of a threat to their security and decided to act by aiding their hapless ally. Surreptitiously at first, they began sending troops across the border. The number of these troops was unknown to the United Nations Command, which had previously concluded that there was little or no danger from the Chinese Communists.

Relief of the South Koreans by the 7th Marines took place with little difficulty on the morning of 2 November. Only light and scattered opposition was encountered. The regiment that evening recorded its first Medal of Honor recipient in the Korean War. Staff Sergeant Archie Van Winkle of the 1st Battalion's Company B led a determined counterattack against a hostile force which penetrated the Marines' perimeter near Sudong. Though he and all men of his platoon were wounded, they succeeded in forcing the enemy back. Van Winkle then realized his left-flank squad had been isolated from the rest of the unit. He dashed through 40 yards of open ground in an effort to reunite the troops. Wounded a second time when he was hit in the chest by shrapnel from an exploding grenade, Van Winkle refused evacuation and instead shouted orders and words of encouragement to his men. After losing consciousness from a loss of blood, the 25-year-old sergeant was carried from the field. His heroic leadership played a significant part in defeating the North Koreans in this brief skirmish.*

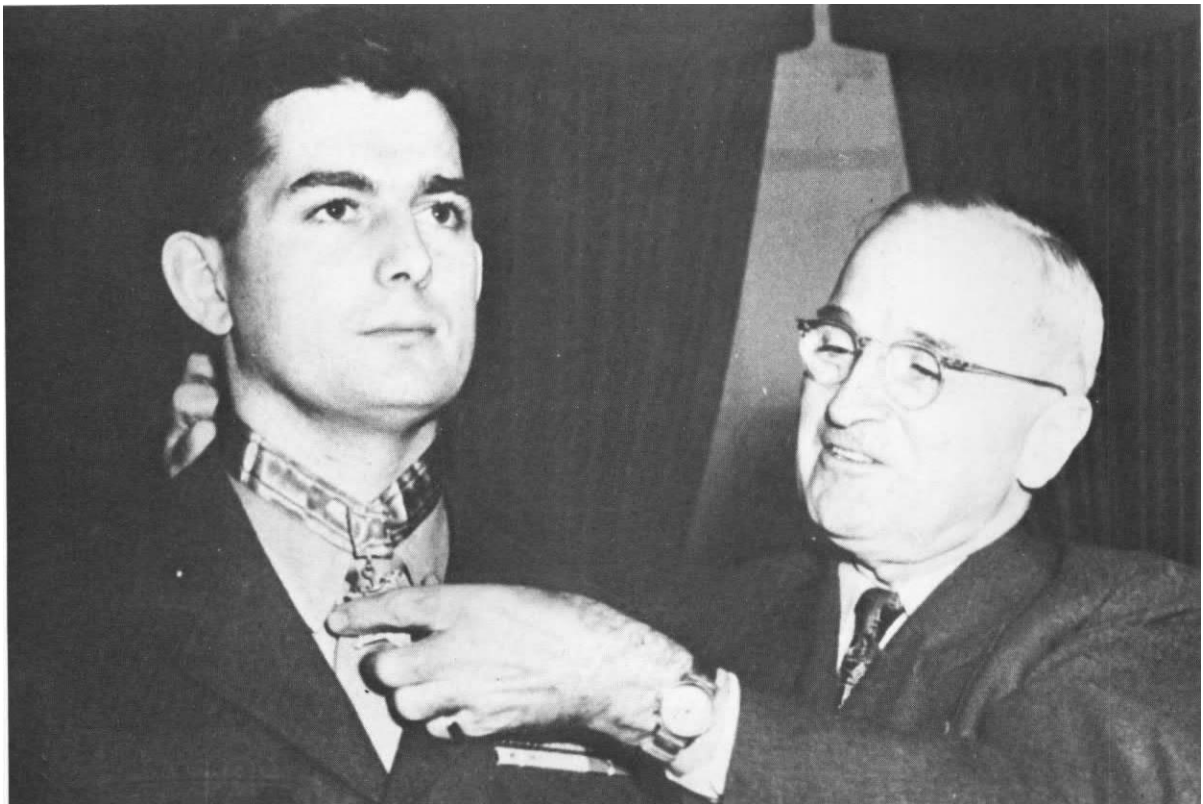
Both the 1st and 2d Battalions experienced the increasing presence of the Chinese after relieving ROK troops. At the same time the North Koreans, although

battered and in retreat, still posed a problem for the regiment. In one episode forward patrols from the 1st Battalion surprisingly discovered on 4 November four camouflaged North Korean T-34 tanks, waiting to strike at the advancing Leathernecks. The Americans also spotted bands of Chinese infantry near the tanks. Firing first on the enemy's foot soldiers, the Marines turned next to engage the tanks as they moved out of their concealed positions to render support to the Chinese. Using machineguns, 3.5-inch rockets, and grenades, they stopped the first three but had to call for air support to halt the fourth. The lone T-34, although having taken hits by the 1st Battalion's rockets, still rumbled ominously toward its attackers. Finally, a pair of 5-inch rockets from an overhead Marine "Corsair" fighter blew the tank apart.

The regiment as a result of combat on the 4th acquired two more Medal of Honor winners. Sergeant James I. Poynter of the 1st Battalion's Company A led his squad in the defense of its position when a larger enemy force suddenly attacked. Although wounded and surrounded, Sergeant Poynter seized a bayonet and engaged in a bitter hand-to-hand fight with the attackers. He then broke away. Spotting enemy machinegun crews moving in, he ran headlong towards them, tossing grenades as he charged. Poynter, in rapid succession, killed the crews of two machineguns and put a third out of action before he was mortally wounded. While this action was taking place, units from the 2d Battalion were attempting to seize a vital hill. Five attempts had proven fruitless. Corporal Lee H. Phillips of Company E led another charge up the slope. Encountering stiff resistance, Phillips' squad nonetheless gained the crest. Only five Marines were left unscathed. A furious counterattack followed. Greatly outnumbered, Corporal Phillips rallied his men and stopped the enemy with grenades and rifle fire. The enemy counterattacked again. With only two other Marines left, the thrust was repulsed. The 20-year-old Georgian in spite of heavy enemy fire emerged victorious and uninjured. Fate eventually caught up with him for he died in combat less than 4 weeks later.

The regiment's objective in its northward advance was the Chosin Reservoir, a manmade lake approximately 45 miles inland. The intensity of the fighting had increased as the Marines marched north. On 6 November 1950, Second Lieutenant Robert D. Reem of Company H, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines during a firefight jumped on a grenade that landed near him and a group of his men. He was eventually awarded a

* Van Winkle was later commissioned and rose to the rank of colonel before retiring in 1974.



USMC Photo A410813

Staff Sergeant Archie Van Winkle being presented Medal of Honor by President Harry S Truman.



USMC Photo 176205

Corporal Lee H. Phillips, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines—Medal of Honor, Korea.



USMC Photo A48024

Staff Sergeant Robert S. Kenmore, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines—Medal of Honor, Korea.



USMC Photo A48388

Private Hector A. Cafferata, Jr.—Medal of Honor, Korea.

posthumous Medal of Honor. Encounters with the enemy declined considerably on the following day, due in no small part to the continuous pounding the Chinese received from Marine air and artillery strikes. The Communists had temporarily backed off. Intelligence reports revealed that 7th Marines had collided with three Chinese regiments. The first attempt by the Chinese to thwart the advancing Leathernecks failed. The 7th Marines, which headed the 1st Marine Division's northward drive, gained the distinction of being the first American military unit to defeat the Chinese Communists in battle.

The regiment on 15 November completed its movement to Hagaru-ri at the southern tip of the reservoir. The latter part of the month found the 7th Marines moving north once again. Its orders were to seize Yudam-ni on the western side of the Chosin Reservoir. Resistance was negligible. Lieutenant Colonel (later General and Assistant Commandant) Raymond G. Davis' 1st Battalion occupied the town on the 25th. A patrol from Company A on the following day was unexpectedly attacked in a thickly wooded and snow-covered area south of the Yudam-ni perimeter. First Lieutenant Frank N. Mitchell's point platoon came under murderous fire, which inflicted numerous casualties. Darting from position to position, Lieutenant Mitchell fired his automatic rifle at the attackers while attempting to reorganize his men for a withdrawal. He then led a search for the wounded. As darkness came the beleaguered unit withdrew. Mitchell although wounded remained behind to cover the withdrawal. He was finally struck down by a burst of small arms fire. Subsequently, Lieutenant Mitchell was awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor.

Chinese Communist Army units had previously initiated a series of full-scale attacks on United Nations forces on 25 November. But nothing eventful happened around Yudam-ni until the evening of the 27th when the Chinese launched a furious counterattack on both the 5th and 7th Marines. Most of the Eighth Army in the meantime was in retreat. The savage blows that the Chinese hurled at the United Nations troops sent them reeling backwards. United Nations units in no way could match those forces that had been sent to oppose them. The sheer weight of numbers was enough to force the troops to withdraw. Clandestinely, the Chinese had dispatched the *9th Army Group* to northeast Korea specifically to destroy the 1st Marine Division. It consisted of nine divisions. Three of these divisions, the *59th*, *79th*, and *89th*, had quickly moved into positions opposite the 5th and 7th Marines and elements of the 11th Marines.

The onslaught cut both the 5th and 7th Marines and their supporting units off from the rest of the division.⁷⁸ The assault itself had been launched on a bitter cold night with the temperature plunging to a minus 20 degrees. The cold was so intense that Marines experienced difficulties in firing some weapons. Browning machineguns and M-1 rifles retained their effectiveness as long as they had been cared for properly. Conversely, carbines and Browning automatic rifles often froze to a point that they were no longer reliable or even serviceable. Frustrated infantrymen attempted to keep their weapons lubricated by using hair oil and urine.

The attack struck the 7th Marines with a viciousness that had not been seen before during the war. All officers, except one, in the 3d Battalion's Company H were either killed or wounded shortly after it began. The 2d Battalion was especially hard hit by the Communists. The enemy viciously cut both Company D and E to pieces. Captain Walter D. Phillips, Jr., of Company E rallied his men for what appeared to be a last-ditch stand. Hurling grenades at charging Chinese troops the young officer fell mortally wounded by enemy fire. His executive officer, First Lieutenant Raymond A. Ball, was also killed. In the meantime, Staff Sergeant Robert S. Kennemore had assumed command of his platoon and was attempting to consolidate its positions. When a grenade landed in the midst of a machinegun squad, he placed his foot on the deadly missile, thereby preventing injury to his men. By 0500 on the 28th, Company E was reduced to an effective strength of one rifle platoon and was forced to withdraw.

Meanwhile, on adjacent high ground north of Yudam-ni Captain (later Colonel) Milton A. Hull's Company D was equally involved in a desperate struggle. Hull ordered his men to withdraw after his post was overrun at about 0300. After his unit regrouped, he led a counterattack up the crest of the hill that the enemy had just taken. Captain Hull fell wounded but continued to lead his men onward to retake the position. The Chinese recoiled from the fierce counterattacking Marines. Hull was however wounded again. As dawn broke only 16 men from Company D were in fighting condition. Sergeant Kennemore later received the Medal of Honor. Captains Hull and Phillips received the Navy Cross; the latter's was awarded posthumously.

The Chinese also launched a strong attack on Company F which was deployed at Toktong Pass, the highest point along the main supply route between Hagaru-ri and Yudam-ni. The tenacious enemy using

automatic weapons and grenades overran one infantry platoon and a machinegun section. Desperate fighting lasted until dawn with the company still tenuously holding onto its position. The battle had cost it 20 dead and 54 wounded, but the company inflicted 450 casualties on its adversaries. Company F was struck again on the night of the 28th; although the attack was repulsed, the company lost 5 more killed and 29 wounded. Injured men suffered most from the terrible cold. Plasma, for example, continually froze—only increasing the hardships of the wounded. During the battle Private Hector A. Cafferata, Jr., played a conspicuous role. He personally killed 15 of the enemy and wounded many more. When a grenade landed near him, he picked it up and hurled it back just as it detonated. Although suffering painful wounds to his right hand and arm, he fought on until he was struck by a sniper's bullet. He later received the Medal of Honor.

By 30 November the Marines' situation at Yudam-ni was viewed by headquarters as precarious. There existed a real danger of being overrun. Major General Oliver P. Smith, division commander, considering

such a prospect, ordered a withdrawal to Hagaru-ri and eventually to the sea. It began on 1 December 1950 with Lieutenant Colonel Davis' 1st Battalion, 7th Marines jumping off first. The battalion moved out at 2100 with the temperature well below zero. Instead of marching via the road leading to Hagaru-ri, the battalion struck out directly across the snow-covered mountains. Its first objective was to relieve Company F and secure the vital pass. Most of the Chinese fortunately were caught by surprise. Contending with the elements, however, became more important than contending with the enemy. The cold, snow, and rough terrain combined to bring about extreme miseries. The men of the 1st Battalion suffered far more hardships from the elements than from the Chinese. The march was extremely difficult, made more so by the staggering fatigue that affected all. It was an ordeal that some men could not endure—two men, for example, became mentally unbalanced and died within 24 hours. Finally, early on the morning of the 2d, the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines came within a short distance of its objective. Communist troops spotted the column and responded by opening up with



USMC Photo A5428

Leathernecks of the 7th Marines catch a few minutes rest during their heroic breakout from the Chosin Reservoir.



USMC Photo A47702

Major William E. Barber upon receipt of his Medal of Honor, August 1952.

small arms and automatic rifle fire. Return fire forced the Chinese to retire and forward progress resumed. Lead elements of the battalion reached Company F's perimeter at 1125. That afternoon Lieutenant Colonel Davis' battalion completed its mission. Carrying its dead and wounded, the battalion concluded the initial phase of the breakout of the Marines at Yudam-ni. The pass was secured and Company F stood relieved.

Five days of fighting had resulted in 118 casualties for Company F. Six of its seven officers had been wounded. Of the 122 men who were not wounded, practically all suffered from frostbite and digestive ills.⁷⁹ The heroic, small band of men had held the pass against repeated onslaughts by an enemy force far superior in number. Under the command of Captain (later Colonel) William E. Barber, the Marines of this company accounted for approximately 1,000 Communist dead in this epic stand. Although severely wounded in the leg on 29 November, Captain Barber continued to exert personal control over the beleaguered company. He maintained and directed the defense of the perimeter in spite of his painful injury and continued to shout words of encouragement to the men as he hobbled up and down the lines. Barber subsequently received the Medal of Honor for his inspirational leadership.

While the 1st Battalion advanced over the mountains to the pass, the rest of the Marines at Yudam-ni

began a slow withdrawal. The march, with the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines leading the way, followed a route that saw the Americans moving over a narrow, twisting road which was bounded by rugged ridgelines and jagged peaks. On 3 December, the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines received orders from Colonel Litzenburg to assault Chinese positions near Toktong Pass. The objective of this maneuver was to clear a path for the units from Yudam-ni. Although 6 inches of new snow had fallen, the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines successfully carried out a skillful attack that disrupted Chinese plans for an assault on the withdrawing column. Caught off-guard Communist soldiers fell back in disarray. Lead elements of the column were thus able to reach the pass that afternoon. Once through the Marines made fairly rapid progress. Minor skirmishes occurred, but these encounters did not delay entry into Hagaru-ri. The last echelon, the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines—the rearguard—safely entered the town at 1400 on 4 December 1950. It had taken 57 hours for the lead units of the column to traverse the 14 miles and 79 hours for the rearguard. Fifteen-hundred casualties were in the group; one-third were nonbattle wounded—mainly frostbite cases.

Linkup with elements of the 1st Marines came at Hagaru-ni. After a short rest the reassembled division commenced its breakout to the sea on the 6th. The 7th Marines and its attached units headed the drive. Lieutenant Colonel Randolph S. D. Lockwood's 2d Battalion almost immediately ran into enemy opposition. With the assistance of personnel from the 5th Marines, it launched a coordinated tank-infantry attack on enemy positions blocking the road. The obstructions were cleared and the defenders were pushed aside, but new resistance occurred a short while later at a point on the road approximately 4,000 yards south of Hagaru-ri. This time the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines came up and joined the 2d Battalion. The combined force with tank support burst through the obstacles. Nevertheless, Chinese fire from the flanking ridges persisted. Progress was measured only in inches as resistance stiffened during the night. At 0200 the regimental command group for the 7th Marines came under especially heavy fire. Two officers were killed and two were wounded. One of those injured was Lieutenant Colonel Frederick R. Dowsett, the regimental executive officer. A few hours later Lieutenant Colonel William F. Harris, commanding officer of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, fell mortally wounded.

Koto-ri, the next town on the line of march, was



USMC Photo A5464

Members of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines await the result of an air strike outside of Hagaru-ri in December 1950. A Marine Corsair flies through the smoke after dropping napalm on a Communist concentration.

first reached by the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines. However, the rest of the 1st Division remained strung out along the way. The column still experienced enemy fire in varying degrees until all units arrived in Koto-ri. By 1700 on 7 December, the entire 7th Marines was safely inside the new perimeter that had been established around the town. Colonel Litzenburg was eventually awarded a Navy Cross for directing the regiment's successful move from Hagaru-ri to Koto-ri. More than 14,000 men assembled at Koto-ri for the next stage in the break out. A number of American Army troops plus 150 British Royal Marines and 40 South Korean policemen were in this assemblage.

The renewed advance began at 0800 on 8 December 1950 with the division striking toward Funchilin Pass. The attacking Americans fought their way over the narrow road that twisted and turned for 8 miles through the pass. Snow and rough terrain prevented the division from securing all its assigned objectives. However, the weather cleared on the following day making it easier for the men to move forward. With the improvement in the weather Marine aircraft were able to take to the air and render some much needed support. Yet, the Chinese persisted in opposing the withdrawal, but on a reduced scale. Resistance eventually became sporadic, and

halfhearted attempts to hold back the division soon proved to be futile. It appeared by nightfall on the 10th that the 1st Division and its attached units had successfully avoided being entrapped by the Chinese. The Communists at this point were powerless to prevent the division from reaching the safety of the Hamhung-Hungnam area. Arrival of all units there was completed shortly before midnight on 11 December.

The 1st Marine Division and its attached units had succeeded in thwarting a massive enemy attempt at encircling and destroying American forces in the Chosin Reservoir region of North Korea. The Marines not only came out fighting but brought out all of their wounded and most of their equipment. This withdrawal to the sea, coupled with the destruction of great numbers of enemy troops along the way, is considered one of the more illustrious achievements in American military history. It was an exploit of epic proportions.

The Chosin Reservoir campaign was a rugged, arduous military operation for the 7th Marines. This unit faced not only a determined foe but also the frightful hardships of a frigid climate. An unprecedented number of Medals of Honor—nine in all—were awarded to Marines from the regiment for their valorous deeds during the campaign. Lieutenant



USMC Photo A5465

Marines, under the cover of large boulders, engage enemy forces. Close air support contributed to the success of the breakout action.

Colonel Davis was one of the nine. He received his for the bold leadership of the 1st Battalion in its movement to and defense of Taktong Pass.



USMC Photo A701889

General Raymond G. Davis, Assistant Commandant, 1971-1972, won the Medal of Honor while commanding the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines.

The 1st Marine Division soon after completion of its withdrawal embarked on board various Navy ships at Hungnam and sailed to the port of Pusan in South Korea. It then moved to Masan to regroup and replace its losses. Evacuation of United Nations troops went according to plan. All departed by 20 December. But in the meantime, Chinese Communist troops had steadily pushed their way south. Seoul fell in early January 1951. This was the second occasion in 6 months that an invading army from the north captured the war-ravaged city. During the second week in January, the 1st Marine Division deployed to the area around Pohang to counter North Korean guerrillas who had infiltrated south and were reportedly only 60 miles from Pusan. Significant contact between the North Koreans and elements of the 7th Marines came on 25 January. The enemy could not match the firepower of the Americans and broke off the encounter. Brief skirmishes continued through mid-February when the Marine division received instructions to head north and join in the effort to stem the flow of North Korean and Chinese troops that were steaming into South Korea. The back of the guerrilla movement in the Pohang region had by this time been broken by the Marines and South Korean troops. In effect, the guerrilla effort never really got started because of the vigilance and determination of United

Nations forces. Once the guerrillas were cut off and their sources of supply curtailed, the Americans and the South Koreans quickly moved to eliminate the main force units.

The 1st Marine Division's orders were to go to Chungju, about 100 miles northwest of Pohang. The town was located in the Eighth Army's IX Corps area. Strong Chinese pressure was occurring in the region. On 19 February, the division came under the operational control of IX Corps and was given a role in Operation Killer, a general limited attack by the Eighth Army. The 7th Marines was placed in reserve for most of the operation but did take part in Operation Ripper that began in early March. The primary purpose of this operation was to inflict as many casualties as possible on the enemy and to maintain constant pressure on the Communists to forestall a new offensive. The Eighth Army hoped that the new operation would force the Communists to relinquish their hold on Seoul. And in fact, the city was retaken on 15 March following a steady northward advance by units of the Eighth Army. During the month of March, the 7th Marines experienced light resistance at first, but heavier fighting for the unit did take place later in the month. On occasion the men had to resort to hand-to-hand fighting to seize their objectives. All along the front the United Nations pushed the Communists back. A systematic attempt to clear all enemy forces from South Korea had been initiated once again. On 2 April, the regiment joined with the Army's 7th and 8th Cavalry Regiments for a new drive. The northward thrust met little or no opposition in the first 3 days and on 4 April the troops crossed into North Korea.⁸⁰

United Nations troops methodically pushed north after the retreating enemy. But behind the front other Chinese and North Korean units were poised for a counterattack. The long-expected enemy assault came late on 22 April. The Chinese first smashed through the South Korean sector and then hit the 1st Marine Division. Major Webb D. Sawyer's 1st Battalion, 7th Marines bore the brunt of the attack. Approximately 2,000 Chinese hurled themselves at the unit. The battalion held until the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines arrived. However, the sheer weight of numbers forced the Marines to retire to more secure positions. As soon as the violent night attack hit the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, Private First Class Herbert A. Littleton, a radio operator with an artillery forward observation team, quickly moved to a more advantageous position to call down artillery fire on the hordes of onrushing

Chinese. When a grenade fell on his vantage point, Littleton unhesitatingly dove on top of the deadly missile and thus saved the lives of other members of his team. He was later awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor.

Heavy fighting along the front compelled the Americans and South Koreans to pull back to the south. As in the past, Seoul became the object of the Communist offensive. Army Lieutenant General James A. Van Fleet, the new commander of the Eighth Army, ordered his troops on the 24th to break contact and to establish a new defensive line in the rear. A withdrawal of 20 miles occurred in some sectors. The Chinese made one more—their last—major push on 16 May. An estimated six divisions struck the South Koreans in the vicinity of Hange. Defenses collapsed and a maximum penetration of 30 miles took place. First Marine Division units were rushed to the area to help plug the hole. The 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Bernard T. Kelly, was one of the units that moved up. On the 17th, the men of the battalion saw particularly bloody fighting as the enemy tried desperately to dislodge the Marines. Murderous fire rained down on the battalion, as the Chinese employed mortars, recoilless rifles, small arms, automatic weapons, satchel charges, and grenades in an effort to overrun the 3d Battalion. Marine aircraft, however, saved the men from being overwhelmed. Accurate close air support ultimately stopped Communists; the battalion was thus able to repulse the attack.⁸¹

A counteroffensive began on the 21st, forcing the enemy to retreat northward one more time. The 1st Marine Division advanced rapidly while inflicting numerous casualties on the Chinese and North Koreans—hundreds of prisoners were also taken by the Marines. The North Koreans deployed into defensive positions and used delaying tactics to let the Chinese escape. Resistance although fanatical did not stop the steady progress of the Americans. On 26 May, Lieutenant Colonel Wilbur F. Meyerhoff's* 2d Battalion, 7th Marines overran a large ammunition dump and captured 113,000 rounds of ammunition, 6,000 pounds of explosives, and 9,000 hand grenades. The 7th Marines on 31 May forced its way through a stubbornly contested pass leading into the town of Yanggu. Despite receiving 500 rounds of enemy mortar and artillery fire, the regiment with tank support from the 1st Tank Battalion overcame opposition from

*Meyerhoff received two Silver Stars while commanding the 2d Battalion during spring 1951.

the defenders along the steep roadway. The rapid thrust of the Americans compelled the Communists to fall back and to abandon the town. By nightfall, the regiment controlled not only Yanggu, but its airfield and the hills surrounding the town.

The regiment moved temporarily into reserve after seizing Yanggu but was soon called up to assist the division in its drive. The middle of June 1951 saw United Nations troops rolling back the enemy all the way to the city of Pyongyang. American patrols penetrated almost to its outskirts, but forward units had to withdraw on the 17th because of enemy pressure. Nonetheless, by 30 June United Nations troops occupied very favorable positions in Korea, holding a defensive line north of Seoul which continued generally along the 38th parallel and in some cases crossed the old border. The Communists now held 2,100 square miles less territory than when they began their aggression in June 1950.⁸² The front stabilized during the summer with the seesaw battles of the previous months no longer occurring. The 7th Marines enjoyed a respite from combat that lasted until the end of August.

On 27 August, the 7th Marines and the Korean Marine Corps Regiment were ordered to relieve American and South Korean Army troops in the Punchbowl region of east-central Korea. The Punchbowl, about 20 miles from the Sea of Japan, is a bleak and forbidding group of hills ranging up to 1,000 feet in

height that circle a small valley, approximately 5 miles in width and 7 miles in length. After moving up, the 7th Marines was directed on 30 August to attack North Korean positions on the rim of the Punchbowl. Muddy ground made the going difficult and the tenaciousness of the defenders delayed the regiment from seizing its objectives until 4 September. A new drive was ordered on 9 September. Hills 673 and 749 were assigned to Colonel Herman Nickerson, Jr.'s* 7th Marines. (Colonel Nickerson had succeeded Colonel Litzenberg as commanding officer in April 1951.) Heavy enemy mortar and machinegun fire prevented the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines under Lieutenant Colonel James G. Kelly from taking Hill 673. Colonel Nickerson instructed Lieutenant Colonel Louis C. Griffin to take the 2d Battalion and go around the hill to strike at the enemy's rear. Griffin's battalion deployed undetected into position on the evening of 11 September. On the next morning the battalion burst forth and swept up the crest of the hill taking the North Koreans completely by surprise.

The 1st Battalion, 7th Marines had also jumped off, but its advance up the hill was slowed by enemy land mines and mortar and small arms fire. The battalion had to fight every inch of the way to the summit. Company B experienced an unusual amount of intense

*Nickerson, later a lieutenant general, commanded the III Marine Amphibious Force during the war in Vietnam.



USMC Photo 156864

7th Marines officers in September 1951. From left to right: Lieutenant Colonel James G. Kelly, 1st Battalion commander; Colonel Herman Nickerson, regimental commander; Lieutenant Colonel Bernard T. Kelly, 3d Battalion commander; and Lieutenant Colonel Louis C. Griffin, 2d Battalion commander.

fighting. Sergeant Frederick W. Mausert III of that company, though already wounded in rescuing two critically injured comrades, led his platoon in a furious bayonet charge against a series of enemy bunkers. Mausert was subsequently knocked down by a shell fragment that hit his helmet. He picked himself up and went on to silence an enemy machinegun. Again he was hit. Refusing aid, he continued with his men and attacked the last of the bunkers. The indomitable sergeant hurling hand grenades at the enemy jumped into a machinegun nest and destroyed the emplacement. Met by a hail of bullets Mausert was killed.

In the meantime, the 3d Battalion was assaulting North Korean positions some distance away from Hill 673. The Leathernecks of this unit also encountered stiff resistance and had to resort to hand-to-hand fighting. In one incident 2d Lieutenant George H. Ramer led a group of Marines from Company I in taking a precipitous peak. Although wounded in the charge, Ramer continued to direct his men while desperately attempting to hold the newly won summit. Strong enemy pressure soon compelled him to lead his Marines back down the side of the hill. Covering the withdrawal of his men, Ramer was hit a second time but refused assistance when members of the group returned to offer aid. He manned the post until hostile troops overran his position and he fell mortally wounded. Both Mausert and Ramer were posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.⁸³

Kelly's 1st Battalion finally slugged its way to the top of Hill 673 at 1415. The 2d Battalion, after successfully completing its part in the seizure, turned and began assaulting Hill 749, but this thrust was cut short when the 7th Marines was ordered into reserve. Hill 749 eventually fell to elements of the 1st Marines late in the day on 16 September. Beginning that month the entire 1st Division entered a phase of positional warfare. The type of combat that the Marines found themselves in for the next 6 months resembled the trench warfare that existed on the Western Front during World War I. Local skirmishes and clashes did occur but no real offensive operations were initiated. Aggressive defense of the positions already held was the primary mission of the Marines.

The 1st Division received a new assignment in March 1952. It had orders to relocate to western Korea and to relieve the 1st ROK Division. Upon arrival, it took over a sector of the extreme left of the UN line with the responsibility of blocking the historic invasion route to Seoul. The division's main line of resistance stretched across difficult terrain for more than 30 miles from the Kimpo Peninsula to the



USMC Photo A163054

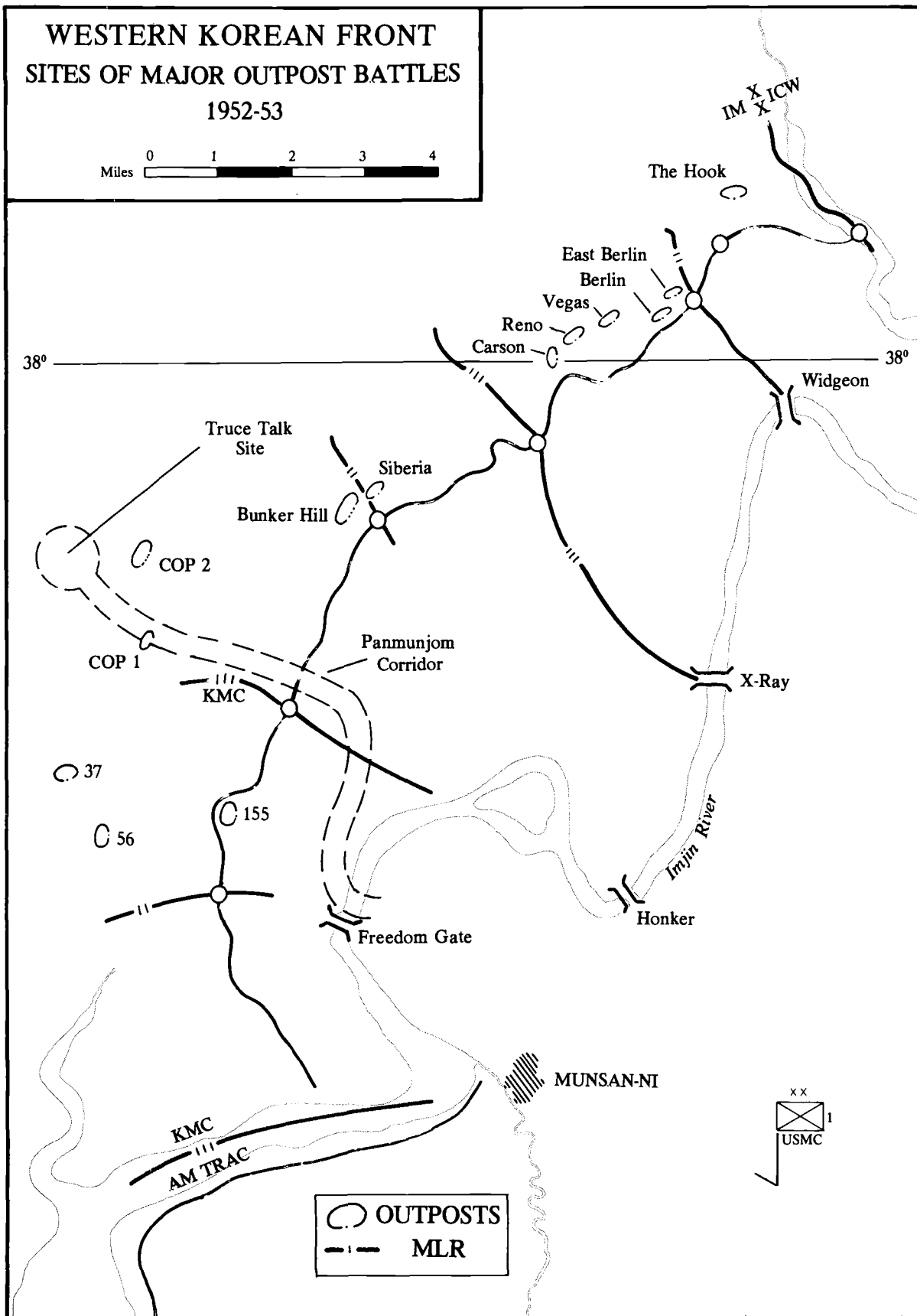
Colonel Thomas C. Moore receives good wishes from his predecessor, Colonel Russell E. Honsowetz, as he takes over as regimental commander, 11 July 1952.

British Commonwealth sector. The 7th Marines, less the 2d Battalion, went into reserve after completing its redeployment. Its mission was to be prepared to assume at any time either a defensive or offensive posture. Additionally, it had the tasks of drawing up counterattack plans, protecting the division rear, improving secondary line defenses, and conducting training exercises. On 11 May 1952, the regiment, now under Colonel Russell E. Honsowetz, holder of a Navy Cross for the Peleliu Campaign, moved out of reserve and replaced the 5th Marines at the front. Major ground action developed late that month with a limited offensive operation being conducted by the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines under 34-year-old Lieutenant Colonel (later Colonel) George W.E. Daughtry. This maneuver was typical of the fighting in western Korea. Such engagements were aimed at either capturing Communist outposts or repelling enemy attacks. The 1st Battalion in its assault was directed to seize two areas of high ground to the right of the regiment's sector. Enemy resistance proved too tough to overcome as withering fire forced the battalion to retire to its own lines with 9 killed and 107 wounded. Included in the latter figure were three platoon leaders from Company A—all second lieutenants. Although it was thwarted in securing its objectives, the 1st Battalion did kill 45 of the enemy. In addition, an estimated 40 more were killed and another 40 wounded.

Two Marines killed in the action were posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. Corporal David B. Champagne was responsible for saving the lives of three other members of his fire team. When a grenade fell in their midst, the 19-year-old Rhode Islander grabbed it and attempted to hurl it back. Just as it cleared his hand, the grenade exploded, showering the young Marine with lethal fragments. Private First

WESTERN KOREAN FRONT SITES OF MAJOR OUTPOST BATTLES 1952-53

Miles 0 1 2 3 4



Class John D. Kelly in one assault knocked out a Chinese machinegun. Although wounded he went on to reduce a second gun. While firing point-blank into a third position the brave Marine was fatally wounded. This battle resulted in the first multiple Medal of Honor awards for the 1st Division in western Korea. The relative calm that followed this engagement was punctuated by brief firefights between the 7th Marines and opposing units.

A platoon from Company G, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, in one such encounter on 3 July 1952, was subjected to devastating fire from enemy small arms, mortars, and artillery while assaulting a fortified hill. Staff Sergeant William E. Shuck, Jr., a machinegun squad leader, although wounded, quickly assumed command of a nearby rifle squad after its leader was hit. He rallied the two squads and led two daring attacks on the position. He was wounded a second time, then received a third wound while assisting in the removal of a casualty. The last injury proved fatal. The Medal of Honor was posthumously bestowed on Sergeant Shuck as a result of his actions during this engagement.

In October 1952, the Chinese stepped up their attacks on Marine outposts that guarded the division's right flank. These crucial positions were occupied by the 7th Marines then commanded by Colonel Thomas C. Moore, Jr. The enemy began by unleashing a mortar and artillery barrage on Outposts Seattle and Warsaw. Both fell but Warsaw was quickly reoccupied. Lieutenant Colonel Gerald F. Russell's 3d Battalion, 7th Marines with artillery support from the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines counterattacked in an effort to retake Seattle. Repeated attempts failed. Meanwhile, Chinese assaults on other Marine strongpoints continued. Outpost Detroit was overrun on 7 October while Frisco although hard hit, was able to hold out.

In the intense struggle for the outposts Company I, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines acquired in the first week of October an unusual but painful distinction. Two of its members, Private Jack W. Kelso and Staff Sergeant Lewis G. Watkins, were posthumously awarded Medals of Honor for deeds almost identical in nature. During the heat of battle on 2 October, Private Kelso attempted to hurl back an enemy grenade that had landed in a Marine bunker. It exploded and he was painfully wounded. Although severely injured he dashed into the open and returned enemy fire until he expired, thereby covering the escape of his comrades. Five days later, Sergeant Watkins, wounded while leading his platoon, continued to move forward under



USMC Photo A49768A
*Second Lieutenant George H. O'Brien, 3d Battalion,
 7th Marines—Medal of Honor, Korea.*

heavy fire. When a Chinese grenade landed in the midst of the advancing Marines, Watkins placed himself in a position to shield his men. He then picked up the deadly missile and tried to throw it back. As was the case with Kelso the grenade exploded as he released it. His action, however, saved the lives of the Marines in his unit.

Heavy shelling continued through October, but no new major Communist assault took place until the 26th when Outposts Ronson and Warsaw came under attack. Both were subsequently captured. The momentum of the attack carried the enemy into the main defenses. The men of the 7th Marines had to pull back and establish a new line. They then initiated a counterattack on the 27th with Company H leading the way. Attacking through a veritable hail of small arms, artillery, and mortar fire, the company drove a wedge into Communist lines. In this battle Second Lieutenant George H. O'Brien played a conspicuous role. Although the 26-year-old Texan had been wounded in the arm and had been struck down by the concussion of grenades on three occasions, he stayed with his men to lead an assault on a well-entrenched enemy force. When the attack halted, O'Brien remained to cover the withdrawal and ensure that no wounded were left behind. He later was awarded the Medal of Honor for his exceptional daring and forceful



USMC Photo A167091

MLR positions of Company D, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines in western Korea. The holes dug into the trench walls furnished Marines protection against enemy artillery and mortar fire.

leadership. Thus, the 3d Battalion recorded its third Medal of Honor recipient for the month of October 1952.

While Company H was heavily engaged, units of the 1st Marines deployed to the area to render support. The attack began anew early on the following morning with the 7th Marines pushing out through a thick blanket of fog. By 0845, Ronson had been retaken. The battle for the outposts resulted in moderate casualties for the regiment but 32 of its men were taken prisoners. A stalemate soon settled over the 1st Marine Division's segment of the front. Only sporadic flareups in fighting transpired. The Communists did not launch a new offensive in the region until the end of March 1953.

On the 26th of that month, the enemy moved against Outposts Carson, Reno, and Vegas. These key Marine positions lay just below the 38th parallel and approximately 10 miles northeast of Panmunjom. The 5th Marines bore the initial brunt of the attack. Elements of Lieutenant Colonel (later Colonel) Alexander D. Cereghino's 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, which had originally been in reserve, rushed to Outpost Vegas on the 27th to assist the 5th Marines in its recapture. The 2d Battalion clashed repeatedly with fresh, well-armed Chinese troops in its attempt to regain the high ground around the outpost. In the desperate fighting for Vegas the Marines attacked the Communists several times only to be stopped by the



USMC Photo A170206

A 75mm recoilless rifle fires at enemy bunkers. This unit fired five rounds, and then moved to another position since the smoke and dust gave away the position to the enemy.



USMC Photo A170420

Colonel Loren E. Haffner passes the cane that was the symbol of regimental leadership to Colonel Glenn C. Funk, 27 March 1953.

determined foe. During the bloody fight, Hospital Corpsman Third Class William R. Charette time and again charged through enemy fire to attend the wounded of Company F of the 2d Battalion. As one Marine observed, he "was every place seemingly at the same time, performing inexhaustibly." He eventually received a Medal of Honor for his actions. Fighting on the following day resulted in another Medal of Honor being awarded. Sergeant Daniel P. Matthews singlehandedly assaulted an enemy machinegun emplacement to draw Communist fire so that an injured man could be pulled to safety by his comrades. The young sergeant silenced the weapon and killed most of its crew before he himself was killed.

Unable to push the Communists out of Vegas, the Americans called in air support. Marine attack and fighter aircraft dropped tons of bombs on Communist positions on the 27th and 28th to weaken the enemy's will to resist. Vegas was finally recaptured on 28 March by the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines with the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines in support. Company F suffered severe casualties during the battle and could only muster eight effectives on the 28th. The Chinese onslaught ended 2 days later with the enemy thrown back to lines previously held. Outpost Vegas remained in American hands. The Chinese had sustained heavy losses yet had gained no ground or tactical advantage in the fighting for Vegas. Between 1 and 5 May 1953, the 1st Division moved to the rear and its frontline duties were assumed by the U.S. Army's 25th Infantry Division and the Turkish Brigade. Later that month the Communists renewed their attacks on the outposts and were more successful this time. Vegas fell

to the enemy a second time and Outposts Carson and Elko were also captured.

In early July the 1st Marine Division returned to the front. The first unit to arrive was the 7th Marines, now under Colonel Glenn C. Funk, one of the Corps' top rifle and pistol marksmen. It relieved the Army's 14th Infantry Regiment and supporting Turkish troops. The Communists took advantage of the shifting forces and opened up with artillery and mortar fire before the Marines could complete their deployment. The 3d Battalion, 7th Marines led by Lieutenant Colonel Paul M. Jones was hard hit in the barrage. An infantry assault on UN lines came on the evening of 7 July. Waves of enemy soldiers with strong support from their artillery surged forth through the rain to strike at the Americans. Outpost East Berlin was overwhelmed but was retaken on the 8th during a daring counterattack. The battle developed into a desperate hand-to-hand fight with the enemy literally being thrown down the slopes of the hill. The Chinese broke contact at 0315 the next morning. The Americans had succeeded in driving out the enemy, but the 7th Marines sustained over 160 casualties in the action. Chinese losses totaled 30 known killed plus an estimated 200 more killed.

The prelude to a new assault began on 19 July 1953, the same day the UN and Communist negotiators had reached an agreement on truce conditions. The Chinese preceded the assault with a mortar and artillery barrage, hitting Outpost Berlin and East Berlin which were occupied by men from Company I,



USMC Photo A170606

A Marine from the 3d Battalion, 7th Marine fires his Browning Automatic Rifle at advancing Chinese Communists.

3d Battalion, 7th Marines. The entire line held by the regiment then came under fire. An infantry charge followed and despite murderous artillery fire from the 11th Marines, the Chinese cut their way through Marine defenses and seized the twin outposts. Heavy enemy fire continued unabated, and Company I withdrew to the rear of the battered outposts. At 0520 on 20 July, the company commander—Captain Louis E. Dunning, a 33-year-old former enlisted man—reported receiving one artillery round per second on the company's positions. A counterthrust was canceled, but Marine air and artillery blasted the enemy on his newly won ground, causing widespread destruction and numerous casualties. The bombardment neutralized any advantage the enemy might have gained in seizing the outposts.

A relative lull in ground fighting followed the loss of the Berlins. This did not endure for any length of time for on the 24th enemy artillery and mortar shells slammed into Marine defenses. The salvo signalled another infantry assault. In the first 24 hours of the attack the 7th Marines' right sector was hit by 13,500 rounds of artillery and mortar fire. Communist troops attacking under a blanket of artillery fire tried to push the Marines out of their positions. Hardest hit was Outpost Boulder City. Two enemy battalions in one instant struck at Company F, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines in the early morning darkness on 25 July. In



USMC Photo A172480

An outpost lookout scans the horizon shortly before the armistice. His light machinegun and grenades are ready for instant use.

the fierce fighting that ensued Staff Sergeant Ambrosio Guillen rallied his platoon and met hostile troops head-on. Although wounded he remained to direct his men until the Chinese were defeated and his position was secured. Sergeant Guillen succumbed to his wounds a few hours after the Chinese retreated. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor—the last to be given to a member of the 7th Marines for the Korean War.

The thrust at elements of Lieutenant Colonel Joseph C. Missar's 2d Battalion soon faltered. By the 26th, the determined resistance of the 7th Marines stopped the Communists, and the whole Chinese effort ended with their forces being turned back. In most areas the Chinese made no appreciable gains in territory while suffering considerable losses. This engagement proved to be the last combat action for the regiment during the Korean War. Fighting for the month had taken a heavy toll—the regiment sustained over 800 casualties. After months of negotiations the cease-fire agreement was finally signed at Panmunjom at 1000 on 27 July 1953. It went into effect that evening, terminating 3 years and 1 month of bloody warfare. Ironically, the amount of land held by both sides remained essentially the same as before the 1950 invasion.

Shortly after the armistice, the 1st Marine Division, along with UN forces, withdrew to new positions south of the main line of resistance. A military demarcation line was drawn between enemy and friendly defenses, corresponding to the end-of-war battlelines. A demilitarized zone was subsequently established between UN and Communist forces. The Marines were assigned a role in the defense of part of the line and were directed to prepare for any renewal of hostilities by the other side. The 1st Marine Division was deployed in the southwest sector of the zone along the Imjin river and near Panmunjom. The 7th Marines continued its deployment in Korea for over a year and a half. To maintain its combat readiness so that it could meet its responsibility of repelling a potential attack from the north, the 7th Marines engaged in a number of training exercises and amphibious maneuvers. Redeployment to the United States eventually came in March 1955. The regiment, then commanded by Colonel Odell M. Conoley,* moved to Incheon for the last time and sailed from there on 10

*As previously noted, Colonel Conoley had been the executive officer and the commanding officer of the regiment's 2d Battalion during the early phases of World War II.



USMC Photo A366762

Colonel Spencer S. Berger, now regimental commander, talks with members of the aggressor force during DesFEx III in March 1956.

March. The entire unit reassembled 2 weeks later at Camp Pendleton, its new home.

Back in California the 7th Marines embarked on a new training cycle to retain the efficiency it had acquired while in Korea. Exercises from the small unit level to the division-wing force were frequently conducted during the next few years with stress placed both on conventional and guerrilla warfare tactics. Cold weather and desert training exercises were also emphasized. Equally as important were vertical envelopment maneuvers—combined assaults by amphibious and helicopterborne troops. Operation Drybeach was one such exercise; it took place at Camp Pendleton between 21 and 25 April 1958. Elements of the 7th Marines under Colonel Jackson B. Butterfield, winner of a Silver Star on Iwo Jima, acted as the aggressor. A similar exercise, PhibLEx 2-59, took place in September 1958. This exercise saw the first employment in a brigade-size operation of the HR2S-1, a giant assault transport helicopter capable of carrying up to 36 troops. The exercise successfully demonstrated the value of this aircraft in vertical envelopment operations. During the following 18 months, regimental units participated in such significant exercises at Twin Peaks, Eagle Eye, and Swan Dive.⁸⁴

Operation Greenlight, April-June 1961, was one of the largest exercises for the 7th Marines since its return from Korea. Thousands of sailors and Marines were involved plus scores of ships and nearly 300 aircraft. Not only was the 1st Division a participant but so were the 1st Marine Brigade, which was located in Hawaii, and elements of Force Troops, Fleet Marine

Force, Pacific, which were stationed at Twentynine Palms, California. Following an amphibious assault on the beaches of Camp Pendleton, the exercise shifted to Twentynine Palms for desert warfare maneuvers. The 7th Marines had a major role in all phases of the operation. Initially, it landed over the beaches by both helicopter and surface craft. The regiment then moved to Twentynine Palms in late May for 8 days of desert training. The desert phase of Greenlight was the biggest air-ground exercise ever held, up to that time, at Twentynine Palms.⁸⁵

Early in 1962, the 7th Marines, now commanded by Colonel Franklin B. Nihart, was given the principal role in Operation Keel Block. Colonel Nihart, holder of a Navy Cross for the Korean War, directed Marine assault troops during the operation. The amphibious exercise was conducted once again in the Pendleton area and took place between 19 and 28 February 1962. It was designed to improve techniques of amphibious warfare and to enhance Navy-Marine Corps cooperation in carrying out ship-to-shore maneuvers.⁸⁶ The effectiveness of the 7th Marines' post-Korean War training was demonstrated in fall 1962 when the regiment's readiness was put to the test.

Cuba Again and a New Caribbean Deployment

The United States in mid-October 1962 had solid evidence of a buildup of Soviet arms in Cuba. American anxiety centered on the presence of strategic missiles and bombers. Cuba and its ally, the Soviet Union, were rapidly establishing an offensive strike force almost on the very shores of the United States. President John F. Kennedy, on 22 October, announced to the American public that the two Communist countries would soon have a nuclear capability that could jeopardize the security of the United States and other Western Hemisphere nations. To prevent employment of the missiles and to ensure their removal, the President ordered the implementation of a number of stringent measures. Included was a quarantine on all further movement of offensive weapons to Cuba and the deployment of sizable military forces to Florida and the Caribbean in anticipation of a possible invasion of Cuba.

Marine Corps ground and air units were in the forefront of this mobilization. The Marine garrison at Guantanamo was quickly reinforced. Almost the entire 2d Marine Division and the 2d Marine Aircraft

Wing either moved into standby positions along the east coast of the United States or embarked on board amphibious shipping. In the meantime, Marine air and ground forces on the west coast had been alerted for a possible deployment. The first organization to be ordered to the Caribbean from California was the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines. This battalion, the 1st Division's ready battalion landing team, was airlifted to Guantanamo on the 21st.⁸⁷ Back in California other units received orders to embark by ship for the troubled waters of the Caribbean Sea. Two battalions of the 7th Marines, the 1st and 3d, were among those to be sent. Thus for the fourth time Cuba became associated with the regiment and bestowed upon it yet another, although brief, chapter in its history. The two battalions joined the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 1st Marines in forming the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (5th MEB), commanded by Brigadier General (later Major General) William T. Fairbourn—a veteran of six World War II campaigns. The four infantry battalions and Medium Helicopter Squadron 361 loaded on board ships of Amphibious Group Three in late October. Lieutenant Colonel Robert B. Prescott's 1st Battalion, 7th Marines was in the attack transport USS *Noble* (APA 218). On board the attack transport USS *Renville* (APA 227) was its sister battalion commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Simpson, who first entered military service at age 14 when he enlisted in the National Guard in 1930. Both ships sailed from San Diego on 27 October.⁸⁸ The task force entered the Caribbean via the Panama Canal a week and a half later.

For a month, the 5th MEB helped to maintain and enforce the quarantine of Cuba. Although the Marines prepared to engage hostile forces, no landing was necessary nor were any combat operations conducted. The show of American forces and the obvious readiness of the United States to protect its vital interests resulted in the removal of Soviet missiles from the island. The confrontation between the two superpowers ended in a tangible victory for the United States. The Marine Corps also had a victory since it demonstrated once more the value of the force-in-readiness concept.

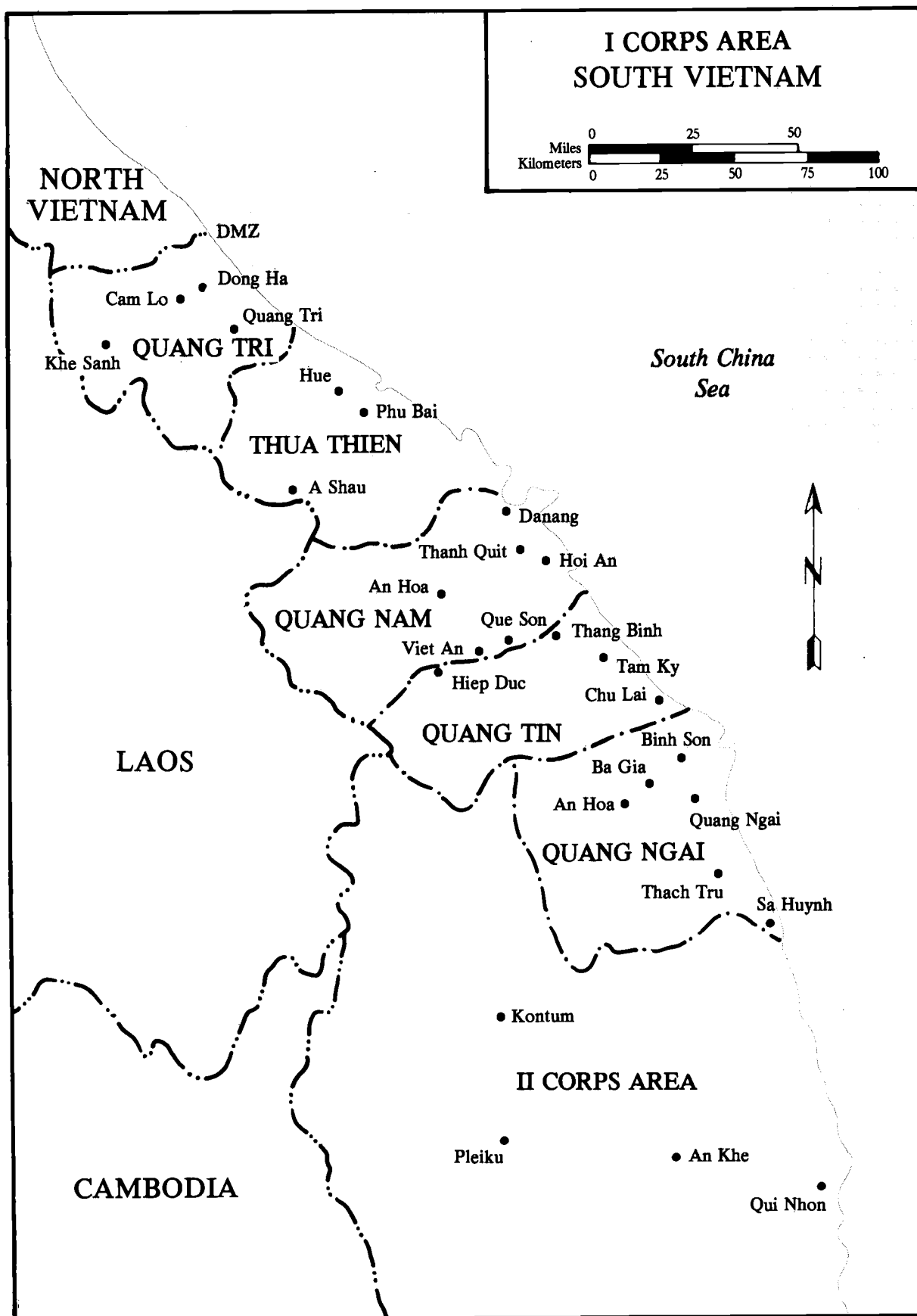
Both battalions of the 7th Marines left the Caribbean for home in early December 1962. Before the 3d Battalion returned, the Haitian Government extended an invitation to the battalion to visit Port-au-Prince, the capital and most important city in Haiti. The battalion did so and its companies paraded through the city. Lieutenant Colonel Simpson's unit had the novel

distinction of being the first Marine tactical organization to come ashore in Haiti since termination of the American occupation in 1934.⁸⁹ The 3d Battalion, 7th Marines finally arrived at Camp Pendleton on 14 December, 4 days after the return of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines.⁹⁰ The regiment soon thereafter resumed its normal routine. But its readiness to respond to an emergency, which it had just proven, would be tested again in just 2½ years.

The Second Indochina War

For years the United States had attempted in Indochina to forestall a Communist seizure of the Republic of Vietnam and also neighboring Laos by providing aid and advice while exerting a minimum amount of force. The situation in the Republic of Vietnam (commonly referred to as South Vietnam) in early 1965 had deteriorated to a point where the United States felt it had either to up the ante and intervene with sizable combat forces or face a Communist takeover of the nation. The South Vietnamese Government at the time appeared powerless to halt the insurgency of the Viet Cong, the indigenous guerrillas who had the active support of North Vietnam. There existed a real and clear-cut danger that the country would fall. President Lyndon B. Johnson, therefore, decided to take drastic measures to stop this from occurring. In early March Marine infantry units from the 3d Marine Division were rushed to Vietnam. Battalion landing teams organized around the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines and the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines made the initial landing at the northern coastal city of Da Nang thus becoming the first American ground combat troops to enter South Vietnam. Previously, the American involvement in the war in Vietnam had not included such units.

The buildup continued through the spring with units from the 1st Marine Division being sent to Okinawa to take up the slack created by the deployment of the 3d Division to the Republic of Vietnam. On 19 May 1965, Colonel (later Major General) Oscar F. Peatross, holder of the Navy Cross for the Maklin Island raid in World War II and now commanding officer of the 7th Marines, received orders to embark his regiment and sail for the Far East. Almost immediately the regiment with all of its equipment moved to Long Beach and San Diego for departure. The entire regiment and its supporting units left on the



23d. Arrival in Okinawa came between 9 and 18 June.⁹¹

Army General William C. Westmoreland, commander of all American forces in Vietnam, in June requested the deployment of a Marine infantry battalion to Qui Nhon Province in the II Corps Tactical Zone of the country. All Marine infantry units in Vietnam were then located in I Corps in the northern part of the country and were under the control of the III Marine Amphibious Force (III MAF), commanded by Major General Lewis W. Walt. Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Bodley's 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, which had been designated as the Special Landing Force (SLF) of the Seventh Fleet, was ordered to Qui Nhon in compliance with General Westmoreland's request. The battalion's primary assignment was to provide security for American bases there. Bodley, a veteran of World War II and Korea, led his battalion in an unopposed landing near the city of Qui Nhon on 1 July 1965. Its deployment in the area was brief as it was relieved on 7 July by Lieutenant Colonel Leon N. Utter, a former World War II enlisted Marine, and his 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, the second element of the regiment to enter the country. The 3d Battalion thereupon resumed its role as the SLF.

At Qui Nhon the 2d Battalion's main task was defense of the airfield, port, and American installa-

tions. Initially, its tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) extended over 32 square miles, but by the end of the month Lieutenant Colonel Utter's men had gradually moved out of the perimeter in search of the enemy and in so doing expanded the TAOR.⁹² The Viet Cong's elusiveness came to the fore as only limited contact occurred. Except for the employment of snipers and an occasional probe by infantry units, the enemy refused to engage the Americans in open combat. Nonetheless, Marines felt the deadly presence of the Communists in the guise of punji sticks, booby traps, and mines—typical guerrilla-type devices.

Headquarters and the 1st Battalion, which was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James P. Kelly, another former enlisted man, were the last elements of the 7th Marines to arrive in Vietnam, landing at Chu Lai in southern I Corps on 14 August.⁹³ Shortly thereafter, Headquarters and the 3d Battalion joined in Operation Starlite, the first regimental-size battle for American forces since the Korean War. Starlite was a large unit operation as opposed to previous engagements which were often conducted by a squad or fire team. These small unit operations had been designed to harass and eliminate local guerrillas and their infrastructure. Large unit operations, on the other hand, were of a battalion size or larger and were intended to destroy enemy main force units and their



USMC Photo A185829

A pair of Marines from the 7th Marines search for Viet Cong snipers during Operations Starlite in August 1965. This was the first major American combat operations in Vietnam.



USMC Photo A801265

Lieutenant General Lewis W. Walt (left), commanding general III MAF, congratulates the 7th Marines for winning the Navy Unit Commendation during Operation Starlite. Colonel Oscar F. Peatross, regimental commander, and Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Bodley, commanding officer of the 3d Battalion attended the ceremony.

equipment and to thwart attacks on military installations.⁹⁴ Both types of operations were conducted by Marines throughout the war.

Starlite began as a combined amphibian-helicopter assault on enemy fortified positions on the Van Tuong Peninsula, 15 miles south of the Chu Lai airstrip. D-day was 18 August 1965 with major ground units being the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines; 2d Battalion, 4th Marines; and 3d Battalion, 7th Marines. Marines landed behind enemy lines and drove Communist troops toward the sea. All escape routes were blocked. The classic encirclement was successful in that units of the *1st Viet Cong Regiment* were forced to stand and fight. After 7 days of fighting, the enemy was decisively defeated with the *80th Viet Cong Battalion* being severely mauled and the *60th Viet Cong Battalion* destroyed. The Communists lost 614 killed and 109 weapons captured.⁹⁵ This first major battlefield confrontation between a main force Viet Cong regiment and American troops resulted not only in a Marine victory but also in the prevention of an enemy assault on Chu Lai.

The next significant Marine operation, Piranha, began on 7 September with the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines coming ashore by landing craft on the Batangan Peninsula. Its sister unit, the 3d Battalion, which had been relieved of SLF duty, was brought to

the objective area by helicopter. Support came from South Vietnamese units while the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines acted as the reserve force during the engagement. Results were less than expected and less spectacular than Starlite as the Marines found no large concentrations of enemy personnel. Intelligence reports had apparently been better in the first operation. Despite the lack of substantial enemy resistance the battle did produce 112 enemy casualties. The operation was valuable to the Americans in that it highlighted various logistical problems. Difficulties in resupply, for example, hampered the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines throughout Piranha. Moreover, inadequate helicopter support caused long delays, especially in the acquisition of explosives to demolish Viet Cong caves and fortifications.⁹⁶

The 2d Battalion, while deployed in II Corps, had in the meantime gotten itself embroiled in a controversy that received international attention. During a search and destroy mission elements of the battalion came across an underground enemy complex. It seemed from all indications that the Communists had moved into the complex and had taken with them a group of civilians. Lieutenant Colonel Utter ordered that tear gas grenades, instead of the usual fragmentary grenades, be used in forcing the enemy from his emplacement. He hoped to avoid injury to the civilians. As it turned out, hundreds of women and children were in the underground labyrinth along with a number of Viet Cong suspects. None of the civilians were harmed, but the employment of riot control agents created newspaper headlines in the United States and elsewhere. An investigation later vindicated Utter. His use of tear gas was considered correct in this case. Prior to this incident American forces had never utilized tear gas in the Vietnam War, although the South Vietnamese had.⁹⁷

The 2d Battalion redeployed to the Chu Lai area in November 1965 where the remainder of the regiment was situated.⁹⁸ The regiment, with its responsibility of defending installations in and around Chu Lai, continued to expand the TAOR through aggressive patrolling, counter guerrilla activities, and battalion or multi-battalion operations. The effort was directed at pushing out main force enemy units from the more populated coastal region. A concerted attempt was inaugurated to deny the Viet Cong his sources of food, revenue, and recruits. In one such operation, Black Ferret, a search and destroy mission southeast of Chu Lai, famed newspaperwoman Dickey Chapelle fell mortally wounded on 4 November 1965 from an ex-



USMC Photo 194484

The 2d Battalion, 7th Marines storms ashore during Operation Blue Marlin in November 1965.

ploding booby trap. Miss Chapelle had been accompanying Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines when she was hit.⁹⁹ Coupled with the regiment's combat operations were its active efforts in civil affairs. Both went hand-in-hand. All units of the 7th Marines were directed when possible to initiate goodwill missions in their areas of operation to counteract Viet Cong propaganda and influence. Special emphasis was placed on medical assistance to local villagers.

By the end of 1965, the number of encounters with regular North Vietnamese Army units had become increasingly more common. The Viet Cong, however, still remained the primary adversary in the regiment's area of responsibility. Skirmishes and small fire fights characterized the end-of-the-year fighting for companies of the 7th. There was one notable exception—Operation Harvest Moon. South Vietnamese forces in early December had been hit hard by the *70th Viet Cong Regiment* midway between Da Nang and Chu Lai. Three American Marine battalions—2d Battalion, 1st Marines; 3d Battalion, 3d Marines; and 2d Battalion, 7th Marines—deployed to the site of the battle to relieve the pressure on the South Vietnamese. Monsoon rains and the resulting mud in the first 10 days of the operation became the real enemies for the Leathernecks. The 2d Battalion, 7th Marines experienced very little contact at first with the Com-

munist; only harassing sniper fire was encountered. The terrain, rugged and heavily wooded, only added to the men's difficulties in carrying out their assigned tasks. A significant battle did take place on the 18th when the *80th Viet Cong Battalion* ambushed Lieutenant Colonel Utter's battalion near the hamlet of Ky Phu. Although the Communists gained fire superiority in the beginning, the battalion turned viciously on the enemy and forced him to leave the field of battle. With artillery support from the 4th Battalion, 11th Marines, the 2d Battalion inflicted 105 killed on the Communists. The enemy's defeat also resulted in his loss of supplies and several weapons. Harvest Moon terminated shortly after this engagement.¹⁰⁰

Starting in January 1966, there was a marked increase in the number of Marine operations because of the improvement in the weather. Mallard (10-17 January) was the first major operation for a unit of the 7th Marines in the new year. The 3d Battalion joined with the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines in a sweep of an area 20 miles southwest of Da Nang. The Viet Cong, as in the past, showed a reluctance to engage in large-scale fighting with the Marines. Resistance was in the form of harassing tactics and the usual widespread use of land mines and booby traps. The importance that can be derived from this operation lies not in the number of enemy killed but in the willingness of the



USMC Photo A186813

A member of Company F, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, holding an M-14 rifle, waits for his companion to fire an M-79 grenade launcher at a Viet Cong position in March 1966.

local villagers to point out enemy rice supplies—72.5 tons were seized.¹⁰¹

The 2d Battalion, 7th Marines entered Operation Double Eagle II in mid-February, but only light contact occurred between the battalion and opposing forces. The unit had more success in engaging the enemy in Utah which began on 4 March in an area northwest of the city of Quang Ngai. Also included in the operation were the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines and the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines plus the 1st South Vietnamese Airborne Battalion. Immediately following its landing by helicopter the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines discovered a sizable North Vietnamese force entrenched in fortified positions. Companies F and G came under intense fire from enemy mortars and automatic weapons. Fighting continued hot and heavy for nearly 5 hours. Determined assaults by the Americans on the enemy's position failed to break his defenses. Ammunition ran low during the battle, forcing some members of Company F to pick up discarded Communist AK-47 assault rifles and use them against their former owners. As darkness approached Lieutenant Colonel Utter disengaged and pulled his unit back 250 meters to set up a defensive perimeter. The North Vietnamese pounded the withdrawal with mortars and then slashed out at the Marines with an infantry attack. The fierce onslaught was brought to a bloody halt by a heavy concentration of firepower from Company H. Upon completion of the pullback, Marine air

and artillery strikes slammed into enemy positions. The North Vietnamese retired from the battlefield, leaving 150 dead. The 2d Battalion, 7th Marines also paid a heavy price: 43 killed and 104 wounded. Utter acquired his second Silver Star in 3 months as a result of his courageous leadership in battle. Utah terminated on 7 March with enemy troops sustaining considerable losses.

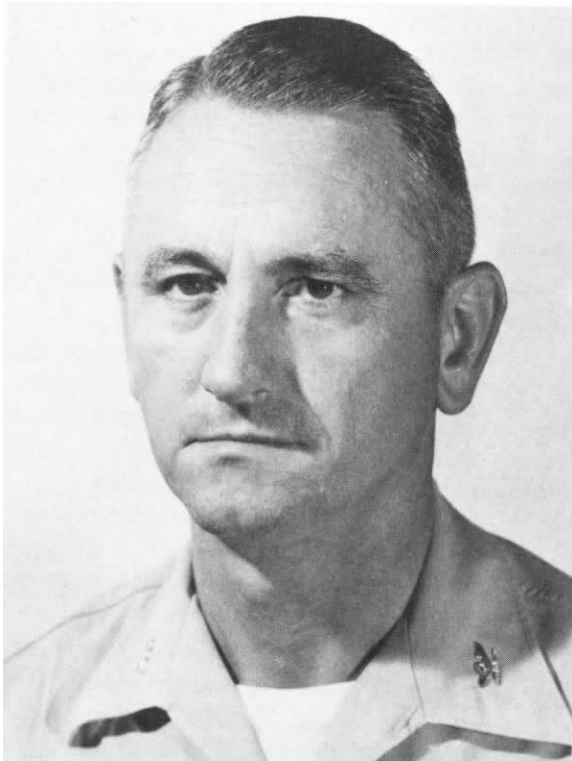
Two more operations, Texas and Indiana, were carried out in the same general vicinity towards the end of the month. The 3d Battalion participated in the former while the 2d Battalion participated in the latter.¹⁰² Hot Springs was the next major operation for elements of the 7th Marines now under Colonel Eugene H. Haffey, formerly a member of both the 1st and 3d Battalions. It began on 21 April when the regiment minus its 1st Battalion launched an offensive drive against reported units of the *1st Viet Cong Regiment* in an area 6 miles northwest of Quang Ngai. More than 3,000 troops including South Vietnamese units were airlifted to the objective from Chu Lai. The operation saw the largest single troop lift by helicopter in the war up to that time. This search and destroy mission ended on the 23d with the Viet Cong suffering over 100 killed.¹⁰³

At the end of its first year in the war the 7th Marines assessed the enemy as being elusive, deadly, and tenacious yet defeatable. His ingenuity in changing tactics to meet various situations demonstrated a high degree of adroitness and sophistication that many



USMC Photo A373656

Major General Lewis J. Fields, commanding general of the 1st Marine Division (left), talks over operations with Colonel Eugene H. Haffey and Lieutenant Colonel Leon N. Utter, commanding officers of the 7th Marines and 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, respectively.



Colonel Lawrence F. Snoddy, Jr., commanded the regiment in late 1966 in Vietnam.

of his opponents once felt he did not have. In large-scale assault, for example, the enemy often attempted to maneuver as near as possible to the Marines before the attack so as to deny the Americans the use of their supporting arms. Men of the 7th Marines during the past year had spent most of their time conducting operations which had been designed to keep the enemy off balance and away from populated areas and allied bases. These operations were often in the form of ambushes and foot patrols, common to all wars. They were monotonous and tedious with negligible results more often than not. August 1966 was a fairly typical month. In that month the 7th Marines, now led by Colonel Lawrence F. Snoddy, Jr.,* conducted the following small unit operations in the Chu Lai area: 1st Battalion—416 patrols, 399 ambushes, results: 13 Viet Cong killed; 2d Battalion—103 patrols, 81 ambushes, results: 4 Viet Cong killed; 3d Battalion—0 patrols, 253 ambushes, results: 15 Viet Cong killed.¹⁰⁴

*Colonel Snoddy's name was later changed to Snowden. He had been promoted to lieutenant general and was serving as chief of staff at Headquarters Marine Corps when this history was being typeset.

The pacification-civic action effort moved forward but at a painstakingly slow pace. Fleet Marine Force, Pacific declared that the prime quality demanded in the program was "patience."¹⁰⁵ County Fair and Golden Fleece operations in which the regiment participated had civic action overtones. The former was intended to break down the infrastructure of the Viet Cong in villages that were located in unpacified areas. The latter was designed to protect peasants in the rice harvest, freeing them from Viet Cong harassment. Marines, in such an operation, sometimes protected the rice from confiscation by assisting in transporting it to more secure storage areas.¹⁰⁶ Golden Fleece 7-1 is a classic example. It took place in a coastal area near Quang Ngai City in September 1966. Lieutenant Colonel Littleton W.T. Waller II's* 1st Battalion, 7th Marines conducted the operation and were able to achieve some rather impressive results. Previously, the peasants in the region lost up to 90 percent of their rice harvest to the Viet Cong. With the battalion's help, however, the peasants on this occasion were able to retain 85 percent of their harvest. The operation also netted 244 enemy dead at a minimal cost to the Marines. Additionally, the 1st Battalion unearthed 727 tons of enemy rice and demolished 600 enemy bunkers and caves.¹⁰⁷

In August, the 2d Battalion led by Lieutenant Colonel John J. Roothoff, a former World War II enlisted man, shifted its area of operations to Dong Ha near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) which separated North and South Vietnam. Lieutenant Colonel Raymond J. O'Leary's 3d Battalion followed in late September but after a brief stay moved south to Dai Loc in the vicinity of Da Nang.¹⁰⁸ At Dong Ha the 2d Battalion entered Operation Prairie along with elements of the 4th Marines. Prairie thwarted the attempts by the North Vietnamese to infiltrate troops from Laos and from across the DMZ into South Vietnam. Heavy casualties were incurred on both sides.¹⁰⁹ Roothoff's battalion acted as a blocking force and conducted reconnaissance-in-force patrols. No significant contacts occurred until 18 September 1966 when the battalion came to the assistance of Companies B and D, 1st Battalion, 4th Marines. After a 2-day march over

*Waller, who was wounded twice in the Korean War, was a member of very distinguished Navy-Marine Corps family. His father was a rear admiral. Two of his uncles and a cousin on his father's side were Marine brigadier generals. His grandfather, Littleton W. T. Waller, Sr., achieved the rank of major general and was an outstanding figure in the Marine Corps in the early part of this century.



USMC Photo A189194

A mortar crew attached to Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines looks for enemy targets during a search and destroy mission near An Hoa in November 1966.

rugged terrain, it joined the two companies in battling the enemy. Intense fighting persisted for 2 more days. On the 24th, Company G, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines was ambushed. Company F moved to reinforce the beleaguered unit but was itself struck by Communist mortars and small arms fire. Contact was broken on the following day. In these firefights the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines suffered 107 casualties. It subsequently was withdrawn from the operation and ordered back to its old base at Chu Lai.¹¹⁰

The 2d Battalion, commanded now by Major Warren P. Kitterman, in December initiated Operation Sierra in the Mo Duc and Duc Pho districts of Quang Ngai Province. Contact was comparatively light although over 100 enemy soldiers had been killed by 21 January 1967, the date of Sierra's termination.¹¹¹ Operation De Soto commenced shortly thereafter in the same area with the objective of clearing the coastal regions of Viet Cong. This was the last major battle in Quang Ngai Province for Marine units. The 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, which had redeployed from Dai Loc in January, saw extensive action throughout the 2-month-long-plus operation. The Marines had a dirty and often painful job of sweeping, patrolling, and setting up ambushes in enemy-held territory. Extensive fortifications with interconnecting passages were uncovered. Progress was slow and costly. The strongest enemy response to the American drive came on the morning of 24 March when an estimated 250 rounds

of recoilless rifle and mortar shells slammed into the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines' command post at Nui Dang. A fuel dump containing 26,000 gallons of volatile aviation fuel exploded, causing considerable



USMC Photo 369699

Holding his M-60 machinegun and .45 caliber pistol aloft, a Marine from the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines wades through waist-deep water while on patrol near Da Nang in December 1966.



USMC Photo A370131

Company E, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines under heavy machinegun fire runs across rice paddies during Operation Arizona in June 1967.

damage. Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General) Edward J. Bronars, the commanding officer and a 1950 graduate of the Naval Academy, reported that despite the inferno casualties were miraculously few. De Soto ended on 7 April with 383 enemy killed; a high percentage of these were caused by Marine supporting arms. The Americans sustained 76 killed and 573 wounded.¹¹² About the time the operation ended the 7th Marines received its initial issue of M-16 rifles. The new, lightweight weapon enhanced the individual infantryman's mobility while increasing his unit's firepower.

In mid-April 1967, that part of the regiment located in the Chu Lai area displaced to Da Nang. Army units had relieved the regiment; in turn, the 7th Marines took over duties of elements of the 3d Marine Division which had transferred to northern I Corps to counter the growing North Vietnamese threat from across the DMZ. Arizona was the first major operation for the regiment after all its battalions had assembled at Da Nang. The 8-day sweep, beginning on 14 June, was centered in the Dai Loc and Duc Duc districts of Quang Nam Province. The regiment, now commanded by 47-year-old Colonel Charles C. Crossfield II, made only moderate contact with Communist forces, but it did account for 80 confirmed enemy killed. Emphasis in the Da Nang area was placed on maintaining security for the numerous American installations

there and on forestalling attacks against them. An active rather than a static defense was utilized. Tactics varied. The 1st Battalion, for example, had on many occasions experienced some difficulties with enemy snipers. Consequently that spring, the battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Jack D. Rowley, began inserting its own sniper teams into selected enemy-held regions in an attempt to offset Communist snipers operating against probing American units. Insertion was done at night and prior to the arrival of friendly patrols. The teams remained concealed while patrol activity was being conducted in hopes of obtaining shots at enemy snipers engaging the patrols. Withdrawal came at night. Although results tended to be mixed, the number of confirmed contacts with enemy snipers were sufficient to warrant a continuation of the program.¹¹³

On 11 August 1967, Lance Corporal Roy M. Wheat and two other men from Company K, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines were assigned the mission of providing security for a Navy construction crew in the vicinity of the Dien Ban district in Quang Nam Province. Corporal Wheat unintentionally triggered an antipersonnel mine. Immediately he shouted a warning to his companions and threw himself on the mine, absorbing the tremendous impact of the exploding mine with his body. Subsequently, he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor—the first



USMC Photo A369883

Colonel Charles C. Crossfield, commanding officer, 7th Marines, and Brigadier General William A. Stiles, commanding general of Task Force X-Ray, on Buddha Mountain during Operation Rio Grande in February 1967.

for a member of the 7th Marines in the Vietnam War.¹¹⁴

The Viet Cong launched two devastating attacks in early November on Hieu Duc and Dai Loc. Civilian casualties in killed, wounded, and missing totaled 121. Over 550 homes were destroyed, leaving 625 families homeless. Lieutenant Colonel Roger H. Barnard's 3d Battalion, 7th Marines initiated Operation Foster to find and destroy those Communist units that had

wreaked so much damage. It centered in the same general area that Operation Arizona had been conducted. Operation Badger Hunt with the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines as the primary maneuver battalion began as a companion operation. The Marines jumped off on 13 November, but the enemy refused to fight and sought to move to the security of the mountains. Reluctance to engage the Marines resulted in fewer enemy casualties than had been anticipated. The search and destroy mission, however, can be termed successful as the Communists suffered significant material losses: nearly 6,000 bunkers, tunnels, and shelters destroyed and 87 tons of rice captured—enough to feed a Viet Cong regiment for 3 months. The regiment ended the month with few casualties and one Navy Cross recipient—Corporal William R. Amendola of Company M. The medal was awarded posthumously for gallantry during the early stages of Operation Foster.

The enemy infiltrated back into the Da Nang area after Foster ended on 30 November.¹¹⁵ Their objective appeared to be Da Nang itself or one of the major installations ringing the city. On 20 December 1967, the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines went on alert for a possible ground and rocket attack. It sent out numerous squad-size patrols into the surrounding area, deploying them along likely avenues of approach. The battalion's vigilance and foresight paid off. At 2300 a patrol from Company D reported spotting a column of approximately 100 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army regulars moving toward Da Nang.



USMC Photo A370095

With armor support, Marines from the regiment advance over open ground against an enemy unit firing automatic weapons.

Corporal Larry E. Smedley, leader of the six-man squad which discovered the enemy maneuvered his men to an ambush site near the mouth of Happy Valley, close to Phuoc Ninh(2). The small group of Marines attacked the numerically superior enemy force with all the firepower it had. Heavy return fire from an enemy machinegun positioned on the squad's left flank inflicted several casualties on the Americans. Corporal Smedley was himself wounded by an exploding rifle grenade. Nonetheless, he led a charge against the enemy machinegun emplacement, firing his rifle and throwing grenades, until he was again struck by hostile fire. Gravely wounded, Smedley rose and singlehandedly assaulted the position. This time he succeeded in destroying the machinegun, but in the attack an enemy bullet struck him in the chest and the young corporal fell mortally wounded.

In the meantime a Marine reaction force had rushed to the area to intercept Communist troops. Joining in the battle that lasted for 4 hours, the reinforcements employed small arms, mortars, and artillery support to turn the Communists back. Enemy losses were placed at 17 killed while the Leathernecks sustained 2 killed and 5 wounded. Apparently, the enemy had hoped to hit the city of Da Nang with rockets, for among the weapons seized during the engagement were two 122mm rocket launchers.* Lethal rockets fired from these tubes had the potential of causing considerable destruction on the huge airfield. Corporal Smedley by his courageous action and bold initiative contributed greatly to thwarting the Communists. He was later awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor.¹¹⁶

Combat for Colonel Ross R. Miner's** 7th Marines tended to be relatively light around Christmas. The eerie calm extended into early January, and the lull afforded the regiment more time to devote to its civic action efforts. The 2d Battalion, commanded by Naval Academy graduate Lieutenant Colonel John R. Love, alone distributed 5,000 pounds of rice to refugees and donated 1,000 Christmas packages to South Vietnamese children. It also provided medical and dental care to 3,449 people during December.¹¹⁷

*These launchers were thought to be the first of their type captured intact up to this time. They were reportedly rushed to Saigon for examination by ordnance experts. As the Americans soon learned, the 122mm rockets fired by such launchers had a greater range than the 140mm rockets that had been previously employed by the Communists in the vicinity of Da Nang.

**A former enlisted man, Colonel Miner had participated in eight World War II campaigns and won two Silver Stars while a member of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines during the Korean War.

During the buildup for the Communist 1968 Tet Offensive, the number of enemy contacts made by the regiment almost doubled over the previous level. A most notable increase occurred in rocket and mortar attacks on 7th Marines positions in and around Da Nang. Regimental casualties for January 1968 were listed as 33 killed and 173 wounded while nearly 400 enemy dead were claimed as a result of the 7th's actions. A sizable percentage of the Communist troops that the regiment met in battle after January were regular North Vietnamese soldiers equipped with helmets, flak jackets, field packs, and assault rifles. These troops had crossed into South Vietnam for the specific purpose of taking part in the Tet Offensive.¹¹⁸

The first multibattalion-size operation for the regiment in 1968 was Operation Worth which began on 13 March. It took place once again in the Dai Loc and Hieu Duc districts. Lieutenant Colonel William J. Davis'* 1st Battalion and Lieutenant Colonel Charles E. Mueller's 2d Battalion came up against elements of the *2d Battalion, 31st North Vietnamese Regiment*. The Marines attempted to interdict the enemy in his forward staging area. Operation Worth, characterized by brief but intense firefights, netted 167 enemy killed and 21 weapons captured. Friendly losses totaled 28 killed and 89 wounded.¹¹⁹

Operation Allen Brook became the most significant operation that spring for the regiment which was then led by Colonel Reverdy M. Hall. Its aim was the prevention of an attack on Da Nang by two enemy regiments, the *36th* and *38th North Vietnamese Regiments*, which had recently entered the country from North Vietnam. The 2d Battalion, 7th Marines began the operation on 4 May on Go Noi Island, 12 miles south of Da Nang Airfield. The Marines expected to hit the Communists before they had a chance to strike. With this in mind the battalion initiated a series of eastward drives across the island with the goal of breaking up troop concentrations and destroying supply dumps. Organized resistance centered in a number of fortified hamlets. The battalion with air, artillery, and tank support frontally assaulted defensive positions. In the first 4 days of its push, the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines killed 88 enemy soldiers, but suffered nearly 70 killed and wounded. Company A from the 1st Battalion joined in the sweep on the 8th. In 10

*Lieutenant Colonel Davis had once before been a member of the 1st Battalion. During the Korean War as a young first lieutenant he received a Silver Star for heroic action at the Chosin Reservoir. He acquired a second Silver Star in February 1968 while commanding the 1st Battalion.

days of fighting, this unit, commanded by Captain William R. Roll, a 29-year-old Pennsylvanian and 1962 graduate of the Naval Academy, was credited with 60 confirmed enemy killed while sustaining 12 dead and 65 wounded. On 9 May, the Americans encountered a large enemy force in the hamlet of Xuan Dai. The North Vietnamese were caught in the open and suffered losses from the combined firepower of the infantry and its supporting arms. Another important engagement took place at Phu Dong (2) on the 16th. Lieutenant Colonel Barnard's 3d Battalion which had relieved the 2d Battalion found an entrenched Communist unit. An all-day battle ensued with the Marines finally storming North Vietnamese trenches and bunkers. In charging the fortifications the men exhibited a fierce determination to oust the enemy.

In one episode, Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines sent a platoon under 2d Lieutenant Paul F. Cobb to aid a nearby unit which was heavily engaged with a well-dug-in enemy force. The Americans had suffered numerous casualties, and the dead and wounded were scattered over the battlefield. The North Vietnamese using machineguns, automatic weapons, rockets, and mortars stymied every attempt to rescue the casualties. Cobb brought up his 28 Marines to provide covering fire for the evacuation. He and his men moved forward across the field, crawling on their stomachs. Cobb had the men lay down a base of fire as they slowly inched their way toward the wounded Americans. The Communists responded with an intense volume of fire. Neither the scorching heat nor enemy fire stopped the platoon from advancing. Twenty meters from the enemy positions Lieutenant Cobb was wounded. Nonetheless, he directed his unit to press home the attack. Again he was wounded—this time fatally. His platoon drove its way into the heart of the enemy emplacements, knocking out several machineguns. Meanwhile, other Marines had pulled to safety the wounded from the battlefield and moved to join in the assault. The Communist unit was forced to withdraw from its strongpoints, leaving behind four machineguns, several AK-47 rifles, rockets, grenades, and a mortar tube. For his courageous and inspiring leadership 2d Lieutenant Cobb received a posthumous Navy Cross. By dusk on 16 May, all North Vietnamese contingents in the battle area had disengaged. One hundred thirty-one enemy soldiers lay dead on the battlefield, an indication of the viciousness of the fight.¹²⁰

Mameluke Thrust, a companion to Allen Brook, was launched on 18 May in an area 10 miles west of

Go Noi. The 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel (later Colonel) William S. Fagan, led off with a series of attacks on elements of the *31st North Vietnamese Army Regiment*. Mameluke Thrust continued through the summer and into the fall. All three battalions of the regiment participated in the long-running operation with the 2d Battalion seeing considerable fighting. Two important engagements took place in August 1968. On the 17th, Companies F and G, which were in blocking positions, made contact with 200 enemy soldiers fleeing from pursuing elements of the 5th Marines. The trapped North Vietnamese, wearing utilities, helmets, and body armor, were equipped with AK-47 rifles and B-40 rockets. The ably disciplined force tried to fight its way out of the encirclement. Determination and courage notwithstanding, the enemy failed to escape and reach safety. Superior firepower of the combined Marine units destroyed the North Vietnamese as an effective fighting force. The Communists had been unable to out-gun the Americans when they attempted to stand and fight. Defeat was therefore a foregone conclusion. Another but less rewarding encounter occurred the next day when Company E of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines came under a heavy concentration of fire from small arms and automatic weapons. The Marines called for air and artillery strikes which compelled the enemy to leave the scene of battle. Company E, after taking 31 casualties, also pulled back.¹²¹

The regiment acquired its only Medal of Honor recipient for 1968 as a result of a sudden, predawn attack on 12 August on the 3d Battalion's Company L in the hamlet of Bo Ban, Quang Nam Province. Lance Corporal Kenneth L. Worley, seeing a Communist grenade fall near him and a group of other Marines, instantly threw himself upon it. By giving up his own life, he prevented serious injury and possible death to his friends.

Lieutenant Colonel Leroy E. Watson's 2d Battalion, 7th Marines on 22 August ended its participation in Mameluke Thrust and reentered Allen Brook, which lasted for 2 more days. The enemy sustained a loss of perhaps 1,000 men. His attempt to maneuver into favorable positions for an assault on Da Nang had been effectively neutralized by the Americans. Mameluke Thrust finally terminated in late October with the Marines claiming over 2,700 enemy killed.¹²²

Fighting slackened during late summer for the regiment which was then under Colonel (later Lieutenant General) Herbert L. Beckington. However, on 20 September 1968, the 2d and 3d Battalions with two



USMC Photo A371751

Colonel Reverdy M. Hall (left) hands the regimental colors to the new commanding officer, Colonel Herbert L. Beckington, on 15 August 1968.

South Vietnamese Army units were able to trap a North Vietnamese battalion. The enemy lost 101 men in the sharp engagement that ensued.¹²³ This fairly sizable encounter was an exception rather than the rule for there were few large-scale sweeps. By and large, emphasis had been placed on counterguerilla operations. Literally thousands of patrols and ambush missions were ordered. Results were 179 small unit engagements, 137 during the day and 42 at night, that netted 124 enemy killed.¹²⁴

The tempo of combat picked up somewhat in November. Acting as Special Landing Force Bravo, the 2d Battalion led by 39-year-old Lieutenant Colonel Neil A. Nelson carried out a helicopter-amphibious assault in Operation Daring Endeavor that lasted from the 10th to the 18th. Centered in a region 20 miles south of Da Nang, the operation did not succeed in forcing the enemy to stand and fight. Yet, it was significant from the standpoint that the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines captured 3 North Vietnamese and 27 Viet Cong soldiers, an unusually high number of prisoners for the Vietnam War.¹²⁵ A few miles to the north, a major operation, Meade River, began shortly thereafter. Infiltration into the vicinity of Da Nang had continued in spite of successful allied sweeps. The III Marine Amphibious Force therefore secretly maneuvered five infantry battalions from four

regiments into the area known to Marines as “Dodge City” because of its “shoot-‘em-up characteristics.” Meade River’s primary objective was to hit the Communists before they could launch an attack on the city or its military installations. Thirteen hundred enemy soldiers had reportedly massed in the region. Early on 20 November 1968, all Marine infantry units were in their assigned positions. The area on three sides—north, south, and east—had been sealed. Lieutenant Colonel Nelson’s 2d Battalion, 7th Marines was then brought in by helicopter from offshore shipping. Upon landing it launched the assault. All American units subsequently began a systematic drive to effect a contraction of the cordon that had been established.

Heavy fighting took place on the first day in the 2d Battalion’s sector. Over 2,500 rounds of artillery shells were fired from batteries of the 11th Marines in support of the battalion. Forward progress was slow but the cordon did grow smaller as the enemy put up a desperate resistance. On D-plus-2, Company E came under a murderous fusillade of small arms and machinegun fire. The advance halted; in 10 brief minutes the company took 30 casualties. Eventually, the Marines pulled back and the area was saturated by an air and artillery barrage. The battalion continued to play an important role in the operation until 4

December when it was withdrawn. The 2d Battalion, 7th Marines had suffered 158 casualties, most coming in the first few days of the operation. Meade River lasted for another 5 days. As the cordon closed resistance increased. The enemy was trapped and exfiltration was effectively blocked for the Americans had placed three men every 15 meters. In the meantime South Vietnamese forces had moved and screened 2,600 civilians so that the enemy could not blend in with the local population. Hardly any of the Communist troops escaped. Marines killed or captured 1,013 enemy soldiers and seized 182 weapons. The South Vietnamese accounted for the rest of the 1,300 Communist troops in the "Dodge City" area. An additional but unexpected outcome of the operation was the capture by South Vietnamese of 71 members of the Viet Cong infrastructure for the region. Although Marine casualties were not light—nearly 500 killed and wounded—Meade River was termed an unequivocal success.¹²⁶

During a sweep of the Meade River area in late December, Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, then under the operational control of the 1st Marines, discovered and subsequently assaulted a sizable group of enemy soldiers in reinforced concrete bunkers. The Communists fiercely defended their positions against the attacking Americans. Stubborn resistance ultimately reduced the exhausted Marine company to approximately 80 effectives. The hotly contested battle ended with both sides leaving the field. Company A, however, was reported to have killed an estimated 150 Communists in the bloody fight.

The last battle for an element of the 7th Marines in 1968 was fought on New Year's Eve. At 1930, a squad from Company K, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines while on patrol spotted a number of enemy soldiers heading in its direction. Hurriedly the squad's personnel prepared an ambush. When the enemy unit got within 40 meters the Americans opened up with rifle and machinegun fire and with hand grenades. The Communist force turned out to be a 40-man advance guard of a much larger unit. Nearly 200 men were in the two groups; all were well armed and were equipped with helmets and flak jackets. The numerical superiority of the Communists compelled the squad to call in air and artillery strikes. The bombardment ended the short but furious battle and scattered the foe. Enemy removal of dead and wounded precluded any accurate assessment of casualties.¹²⁷

Lieutenant Colonel William F. Bethel's 1st Battalion, 7th Marines joined with the 2d Battalion, 26th

Marines to kick off Operation Linn River on 27 January 1969. It began as another cordon and search operation in Quang Nam Province. Results were less than expected since the Marines did not make as many significant contacts with the enemy as anticipated. A contributing factor was the severe damaging by ground fire of four troop-carrying helicopters on D-plus-one. The helicopters remained out of service until after the termination of Linn River on 7 February. Unfortunately, the loss of the aircraft resulted in a serious impairment of infantry mobility during the operation. The 1st Battalion after the operation ended stayed in the area, sending company-size forays into suspected Communist-controlled territory. Operating often at night the Marines did enjoy some success. In one move Company A surprised an enemy unit at an instructional center and killed 17 Communist soldiers. In addition, it captured 37 weapons plus enough food and supplies to equip 200 troops for a month. Company B also achieved some favorable results. Towards the end of February, this unit in a series of night ambushes and sniper attacks accounted for 30 enemy casualties over a 5-day period.¹²⁸

On 23 February 1969, the 7th Marines acquired two more posthumous Medal of Honor winners. Private First Class Oscar P. Austin of the 2d Battalion and other members of Company E came under a fierce enemy ground attack about 6½ miles west of Da Nang. Seeing that one of his companions had fallen wounded in a dangerously exposed position, Austin raced across the fire-swept terrain to render assistance. Twice the young Texan threw himself between the wounded Marine and North Vietnamese infantrymen and was himself mortally wounded. On the same day but in another area of Quang Nam Province, near the Bo Ban region of Hieu Duc District, a platoon from Company M of the 3d Battalion was ambushed while moving through a rice paddy covered with tall grass. Lance Corporal Lester W. Weber, a machinegun squad leader, lunged at a group of North Vietnamese. He successfully overcame 1 soldier and forced 11 others to break contact. The 20-year-old Marine then moved on and put one more soldier out of the fight after hand-to-hand combat. He neutralized another position by subduing two more North Vietnamese. As Weber moved to attack another enemy soldier he was mortally wounded.¹²⁹

Oklahoma Hills was the most important multibattalion operation for the 7th Marines during spring 1969. Colonel (later Lieutenant General) Robert L.

Nichols* commanded the regiment at this time. All units of the organization plus the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines and the 3d Battalion, 26th Marines participated in the effort. Centered in precipitous terrain southwest of Da Nang, the operation got underway in late March with its main objectives being the destruction of suspected North Vietnamese bases and the interdiction of enemy approaches to Da Nang. Encounters were at first generally sporadic, coming mostly with small rear guard security units employed to defend North Vietnamese camps. The enemy, as often in the past, chose to withdraw rather than fight. He successfully avoided major engagements with the Marines by skillfully using the dense jungle, which had double and even triple canopy in places, to evade his pursuers. By circling around the Americans he at times returned to former bases once friendly forces departed the area. Oklahoma Hills was a physically exhausting operation for the average infantryman. The rough, frequently slippery terrain and thick jungle curtailed the Americans' ability to maneuver. With some rifle companies operating continuously in this type of country for as long as 45 days, it was not unexpected that the number of nonbattle casualties rose into the hundreds. Broken bones and sprains were numerous as the men often fell when climbing or moving over the rugged landscape.

Although the enemy generally attempted to do all they could to avoid contact, there were a few instances when the Communists were unable to steer clear of the searching Americans. One such exception took place on 21 April when elements of Lieutenant Colonel John A. Dowd's 1st Battalion, 7th Marines detected a sizable body of men trying to cross the Vu Gia River. The enemy was on the south bank with the Marines on the north bank. The North Vietnamese, unaware of the presence of the Americans, entered the river and headed toward the opposite shore by wading and by boat. They were allowed to get to midstream before the concealed Marines opened up with rifles, machineguns, and grenades. Artillery crews from the 11th Marines in the meantime saturated the south bank with a heavy barrage to cut off possible avenues of escape. Mortars and 106mm recoilless rifles supported the onslaught. The enemy caught completely by surprise was thrown into confusion and disarray. The devastating fusillade took a high toll in casualties, although no exact figures could be ascertained. It ap-

peared that few, if any, of the enemy had been fortunate enough to escape. On the other hand, only two Marines suffered slight wounds.

About a week later, the 1st Battalion made contact with another large force. This engagement was fought a little further downstream. While the battalion maneuvered along the south bank, the Marines sighted the enemy on the same side of the river. They called for air support and then attacked. A pitched battle ensued and raged for 8 hours. The North Vietnamese withdrew after nightfall. Sixty of their soldiers were killed while the Marines sustained 9 dead and 60 wounded and evacuated. Oklahoma Hills ended on 29 May with nearly 600 North Vietnamese estimated as being killed. In addition, the Americans uncovered a massive network of North Vietnamese installations. Over 1,300 Communist huts, bunkers, tunnels, and other facilities were destroyed. Large quantities of supplies were also seized, including more than 11,000 rounds of ammunition and grenades, 500 pounds of explosives, 228 weapons, and 9,373 pounds of rice and corn. The long-range effect on the enemy could not be determined, but the 2-month operation did have some tangible short term results. It limited the enemy's access, at least temporarily, to his base camps, caches, and hospitals. And, finally, it forced him to disperse his forces, breaking up his large units into small bands.¹³⁰

The 7th Marines saw limited action in the weeks following Oklahoma Hills. Part of the regiment took part in Phase I of Pipestone Canyon which unfortunately produced few beneficial effects. Fighting picked up in August 1969. At 0300 on the 12th, elements of the 1st Battalion intercepted and engaged a small group of enemy soldiers. Air strikes were subsequently called on suspected targets. Shortly afterwards, Company C came upon an entrenched force in the vicinity of An Hoa. Company B moved up to assist. Heavy air and artillery strikes hit the enemy bunkers as a prelude to a frontal assault. That afternoon Company C struck at the positions but met stiff resistance. Hand-to-hand fighting followed. Company A meanwhile entered the battle. In deploying to the site it unexpectedly came across another Communist unit and proceeded to engage the surprised enemy band. Companies B and C eventually burst through the North Vietnamese fortifications and routed the defenders. Tenacity and superior firepower proved to be a winning combination for the Americans. Both sides broke off the battle after 90 minutes of combat. Fighting between Company A and the enemy also

*General Nichols subsequently commanded Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic.



USMC Photo A373192

Men of Company D, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines climb on board amphibian tractors in July 1969 prior to moving out against a suspected North Vietnamese stronghold.

stopped. The Communist death toll was placed at 146. The number of weapons seized totaled 50. The 1st Battalion, 7th Marines lost 15 killed and 66 wounded and evacuated.¹³¹

A new clash occurred on the following day, the 13th, in which the regiment suffered the loss of one of its battalion commanders. Early in the afternoon, the 1st Battalion advanced along a four-company front and suddenly came under a heavy volume of small arms, automatic weapons, and machinegun fire from North Vietnamese soldiers occupying well-fortified emplacements in a tree line. To better evaluate the situation, Lieutenant Colonel John A. Dowd, the battalion's commanding officer, led a portion of his command group to a more advantageous location. After crossing an open stretch of ground about 50 to 60 meters from the tree line a burst of automatic fire hit the group. Lieutenant Colonel Dowd fell dead with a gunshot wound to the head while two others were wounded. Thirty-nine-year-old Lieutenant Colonel Frank A. Clark assumed command on the next day. Lieutenant Colonel Dowd subsequently received a posthumous Navy Cross.¹³² Intermittent yet intense fighting persisted for the next few days. Marine

casualties mounted; between the 20th and 27th, for example, the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines alone sustained 27 killed and 255 wounded. A good proportion of these came from constant enemy mortaring and shelling.¹³³ The regiment at this time had shifted its operations to the Que Son region along the Quang Nam-Quang Tin border. There it cooperated with units of the Army's Americal Division. Casualties still ran high.

On 28 August, a particularly hot and humid day, Company K, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, led by 1st Lieutenant Thomas B. Edwards III, conducted a search and destroy mission in the Que Son-Hiep Duc Valley. That afternoon it was hit hard by regular North Vietnamese Army units. The brief but furious battle that ensued probably was unmatched for the display of personal valor by an organization of the 7th Marines in the Vietnam War. Although the enemy used a variety of individual and crew-served weapons in the attack, the Americans recovered from the suddenness of the assault, rallied, and charged the camouflaged emplacements of the North Vietnamese. Lance Corporal Jose F. Jimenez was one who initially seized the initiative and plunged forward. The former

Mexican national killed several of the enemy and silenced the anti-aircraft gun that had caused a number of American casualties. He went on to storm a nearby trench containing a group of hostile soldiers firing automatic weapons. Jimenez killed or wounded most of the enemy in the position. As he pressed forward to attack another emplacement, the Marine corporal was struck down by enemy fire. Second Lieutenant Richard L. Jaehne, in the meantime, ordered his platoon to counterattack. When one of his squads was halted by heavy fire from a machinegun, the young officer inched his way through a rice paddy to singlehandedly rush the gun. After lobbing hand grenades which destroyed the emplacement, Jaehne ran forward firing his .45 caliber pistol killing those of the enemy who had survived the explosion of the grenades. Jaehne, although injured himself, continued to direct his men during the engagement.

In the Marine counterattack Private First Class Dennis D. Davis raced across 10 meters of open ground and leaped on top of an enclosed, fortified bunker. He threw a grenade into a rear aperture but just as he released it an enemy grenade landed near him and seriously wounded the Marine private. Disregarding his injuries, Davis crawled under enemy fire to the front of the bunker and pushed a grenade through a firing port. He entered following the explosion and seized a Communist machinegun which he used to fire on a nearby hostile emplacement. Seeing a fallen Marine about 20 meters from him, Davis dashed from the bunker and dragged the man to a covered position only to learn that he was dead. Picking up the casualty's rifle he charged another fortification. Davis, weakened by the loss of blood, was cut down by enemy fire before he could reach it. The North Vietnamese eventually retired from the scene of battle after Company K broke through their fortifications. Lance Corporal Jimenez received a posthumous Medal of Honor while Private First Class Davis and 2d Lieutenant Jaehne both received Navy Crosses. The former was awarded the decoration posthumously.¹³⁴

Casualties for the 7th Marines during August rose to 649, but battle losses dropped dramatically in September—to 258. Although enemy activity generally declined in early fall throughout the 1st Marine Division's sector, the 7th Marines experienced considerable action. For the month of October, it made 145 contacts with the enemy which was nearly half of the total for the entire division.¹³⁵ On 12 November 1969, the regiment acquired another

posthumous Medal of Honor winner. Private First Class Ralph E. Dias of Company D, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines and other members of the 2d Platoon encountered an enemy unit while patrolling in the Que Son Mountains. Dias on his own initiative assaulted a Communist machinegun emplacement but was severely wounded as he braved enemy fire. He crawled 15 meters to a large boulder to throw grenades at the gun's crew. Unsuccessful in destroying the gun, he left his cover and moved into the open to hurl his grenades. He was shot once again—this time fatally. The last grenade thrown by Dias, however, destroyed the machinegun.¹³⁶ He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

November proved to be extremely lucrative in the seizure of Communist material. Great quantities of arms, equipment, and supplies were unearthed. The 1st Battalion particularly made some unusual discoveries. Almost 200 weapons were captured by the unit. Two examples of important seizures made by elements of the battalion are as follows: On the 20th, Company C uncovered a huge enemy cache near An Hoa. Included were 40,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, food, and military hardware of various types. Companies B and C found more hidden supplies a few days later. The new discovery revealed a stockpile of 3,000 enemy grenades.¹³⁷

The heavy and often bloody fighting of 1968 and 1969 had taken its toll among enemy units operating in the Republic of Vietnam. Both the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese suffered severe losses in manpower and in material. Lacking stamina in early 1970 for large-size operations, the Communists struck back at allied units by hurling small elite bands of soldiers at selected targets. These limited forays proved to be costly to friendly forces, but more so to the enemy. One such attack happened before dawn on the morning of 6 January 1970. Fire support Base Ross, located in the Que Son Valley and where half of the 1st Battalion was based, came under intense fire from mortars and grenades. Sappers, meanwhile, had infiltrated to points opposite the base's perimeter. An attempted penetration of the camp followed. Three groups did manage to enter and inflicted considerable damage before being eliminated. Friendly casualties totalled 14 killed and 40 wounded and evacuated. On the other hand, 39 enemy soldiers died in the attack.¹³⁸

A series of search and destroy missions were soon launched by the 7th Marines in the Que Son Mountains to thwart further attacks on American positions such as Ross. The region that the regiment now



USMC Photo A372088

Standing at attention, Colonel Robert L. Nichols, on the left, and Colonel Gildo S. Codispoti, on the right, watch units of the 7th Marines pass in review. The command of the regiment had just passed from Colonel Nichols to Colonel Codispoti.

deployed to had been used by the enemy for mounting out his raids. The mountains were ideally suited for the location of Communist base camps and staging areas. The Marines in sweeping the area hoped to throw the enemy off balance and ultimately reduce his presence there.¹³⁹ In spite of the dense jungle, heavy rainfall, and resulting poor visibility the regiment, now commanded by Colonel Gildo S. Codispoti, a veteran of World War II and Korea, discovered a number of North Vietnamese installations. The 2d and 3d Battalions achieved a great measure of success during February. More than 20 camps were destroyed with substantial casualties being inflicted on rear guard security units. Additionally, a large cache of arms and equipment was uncovered. Over 200 weapons, 103,000 rounds of ammunition, and more than 3,400 hand grenades were taken. This was the biggest haul by a 1st Marine Division unit in a year. Quantities of food and medical supplies were also seized.¹⁴⁰

This movement through the mountains, however, did not produce many significant engagements. Brief firefights were more the rule. In one sharp clash on 12 February 1970, a platoon-size patrol from Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines was ambushed by an enemy unit hidden behind a hedgerow. Staff Sergeant Jerry E. Lineberry, spotting a group of Marines caught in the open, led a machinegun team to assist them. As he rushed forward to assist, Lineberry was wounded but stayed with his comrades to direct the evacuation of other casualties. He then called in Marine artillery

fire on enemy targets until wounded a second time. Staff Sergeant Lineberry subsequently was awarded a posthumous Navy Cross.¹⁴¹

The last Medal of Honor presented to a member of the 7th Marines during the Vietnam War came as a result of a sudden grenade attack 3 months later on the 3d Battalion's Company I. When one hand grenade landed near Lance Corporal James D. Howe and two other Marines early on 6 May 1970, the 21-year-old rifleman shouted a warning and then leaped on the deadly missile. Corporal Howe's selfless act which caused his own death preserved the lives of his two comrades.

Although the enemy endured setbacks, he continued, much to the chagrin and vexation of the Marines, to retain a capacity for mounting hit-and-run attacks. The 7th Marines frequently fell prey to enemy shelling by mortars and rockets. Constant patrolling was employed to offset these attacks. The first six months of 1970 witnessed a series of fierce firefights. These brief encounters between elements of the regiment and the enemy resulted in the deaths of an estimated 1,166 Communist soldiers and the capture of 44. Many times, however, the Communists chose not to engage the Americans and their superior firepower. Instead they would often direct their efforts at terrorizing friendly civilians. Enemy strategists apparently expected such measures would lead to a breakdown and a disruption of the pacification program. Villages that supported the South Vietnamese Government were, as always, prime targets. One of the most devastating attacks during 1970 was carried out by elements of an enemy battalion on the hamlet of Thanh My and a nearby bridge. At sunrise on 11 June, a combined mortar and sapper attack hit the unsuspecting villagers. The raid killed 100 civilians and caused the almost total destruction of the hamlet. Moreover, the 7th Marines sustained 10 casualties when it sent a rescue unit to the scene.¹⁴²

During the summer, elements of the regiment, now commanded by former enlisted man Colonel Edmund G. Darning, Jr., entered two major large-scale operations. Pickens Forest, a search and clear mission, began on 16 July with the 2d and 3d Battalion, 7th Marines as the main participants. Support came from the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines and the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines. The operation, centered in the Thu Bon River valley, generated little reaction from the enemy. When it ended, 24 August, no more than scattered clashes had been reported.¹⁴³ Imperial Lake was undertaken just a week later. The 2d Battalion



USMC Photo A373243

Colonel Edmund G. Dering, Jr., commanding officer of the 7th Marines, standing to the immediate right of the shield, poses with his regimental staff in April 1970.

under Lieutenant Colonel Vincent A. Albers, Jr., and elements of Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth L. Robinson's 3d Battalion, 7th Marines combed the central Que Son Mountains, looking for the evasive enemy. Accurate sniper fire helped hamper their maneuverability and air support had to be employed to suppress this irritant. One notable result of the operation occurred when units of the 7th Marines captured a command post for a North Vietnamese battalion. The bodies of four senior commanders were found in one of the destroyed bunkers. Imperial Lake, as it turned out, was the last operation of the war for the regiment.¹⁴⁴

Withdrawal from Imperial Lake was caused by the ordered redeployment of the regiment. This movement was part of President Richard M. Nixon's program of phasing out American combat forces from the war. The 7th Marines was scheduled for relocation to Camp Pendleton, its old home. Standdown procedures began on 7 September 1970 with the 1st Battalion transferring to the port of Da Nang 2 days later. The new regimental commander, Colonel Robert H. Piehl, a 48-year-old native of Wisconsin, and his headquarters staff moved there on the 23d. Subsequently, the rest of the regiment followed. The 1st Battalion departed first from Vietnam, sailing on 23 September on board the amphibious cargo ship USS *Mobile* (LKA

115). Headquarters left by air on 1 October. The 2d and 3d Battalions boarded the amphibious transport dock USS *Juneau* (LPD 10) and sailed on 13 October. By the end of the month, all elements of the regiment had arrived in California and reassembled at Camp Pendleton.¹⁴⁵ Thus came to an end more than 5 years of continuous, frustrating, and frequently difficult warfare for the 7th Marines—the longest period of combat in its history.

The regiment upon arrival was attached temporarily to the 5th Marine Amphibious Brigade and remained greatly understrength for 6 months. In spring 1971, the 1st Marine Division completed its redeployment from Vietnam. The 7th Marines was detached from the brigade and reassigned to the division in April. It soon embarked on a rebuilding program to return itself to the authorized manning level. Within a short time a series of training exercises was inaugurated to guarantee and maintain the unit's combat proficiency. In one exercise the 3d Battalion relocated to Panama in June 1972 for 3 weeks of jungle training. This was the first deployment of a regimental unit outside the United States in the post-Vietnam era.¹⁴⁶

Conclusion

Throughout approximately half of its history, the

7th Marines has been involved in combat or combat-related activity. Fifteen years of experience in the Pacific and in Asia with significant participation in three major conflicts has prepared the regiment to respond to emergencies with the professionalism that is the hallmark of the Marine Corps. Time and again it has proven its battle readiness. The responses it has made to crucial and exacting war or warlike conditions in Cuba, in the Pacific, in China, in Korea, and in Vietnam have consistently been executed with adroitness and effectiveness—unique features which all Marine units strive to attain.

A military organization is only as good as the per-

sonnel who form it, and the 7th Marines has been fortunate during its existence to have within its ranks more than its share of men who have excelled in personal courage. Thirty-four members of the regiment have received the nation's highest military award for bravery—the Medal of Honor. This, the highest number of awards for any regiment in the Marine Corps, is indicative of the caliber of men who have served in the 7th Marines. The actions and esprit de corps of these individuals and others who have been in the regiment during the difficulties of war and the constant readiness of peace have brought credit and honor to both the Marine Corps and the United States.

NOTES

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Appendix A

COMMANDING OFFICERS

Col Melville J. Shaw	19 Aug 1917 - 23 Sep 1918
Col Newt H. Hall	24 Sep 1918 - 22 Aug 1919
Maj Gerard M. Kincade	23 Aug 1919 - 5 Sep 1919
Col Richard P. Williams	6 Sep 1933 - 15 Jan 1934
LtCol John R. Henley	16 Jan 1934 - 17 Jan 1934
Col Earl H. Jenkins	1 Jan 1941 - 2 Apr 1941
LtCol Amor LeR. Sims	20 Sep 1942 - 21 Jun 1943
Col James W. Webb	1 May 1941 - 19 Sep 1942
Col Amor LeR. Sims	20 Sep 1942 - 21 Jun 1943
Col Julian N. Frisbie	22 Jun 1943 - 20 Feb 1944
Col Herman H. Hanneken	21 Feb 1944 - 3 Nov 1944
LtCol Norman Hussa	4 Nov 1944 - 7 Nov 1944
Col Edward W. Snedeker	8 Nov - 1944 20 Sep 1945
Col Richard P. Ross, Jr.	21 Sep 1945 - 27 Jan 1946
Col Paul Drake	28 Jan 1946 - 5 Mar 1947
Col Alva B. Lasswell	1 Oct 1947 - 10 May 1948
Col William N. McKelvy, Jr	11 May 1948 - 31 Aug 1948
Col Lyman G. Miller	1 Sep 1948 - 29 Sep 1949
Col Homer L. Litzenberg, Jr	17 Aug 1950 - 14 Apr 1951
Col Herman Nickerson, Jr.	16 Apr 1961 - 20 Sep 1951
LtCol John J. Wermuth, Jr.	21 Sep 1951 - 10 Mar 1952
Col Russell E. Honsowetz	11 Mar 1952 - 4 Nov 1952
Col Thomas C. Moore, Jr.	11 Jun 1952 - 4 Nov 1952
Col Loren E. Haffner	5 Nov 1952 - 26 Mar 1953
Col Glenn C. Funk	27 Mar 1953 - 3 Aug 1953
Col Jack P. Juhan	4 Aug 1953 - 4 Dec 1953
Col Wendell H. Duplantis	5 Dec 1953 - 24 Feb 1954
Col Earl A. Sneeringer	25 Feb 1954 - 3 Jul 1954
Col Henry H. Crockett	4 Jul 1954 - 3 Oct 1954
Col Odell M. Conoley	4 Oct 1954 - 1 Jun 1955
Col Spencer S. Berger	2 Jun 1955 - 16 Jul 1956
LtCol Orville V. Bergren	17 Jul 1956 - 17 Aug 1956
Col Robert A. McGill	18 Aug 1956 - 30 Apr 1957
Col Thomas E. Williams	1 May 1957 - 10 Dec 1957
Col Jackson B. Butterfield	11 Dec 1957 - 23 May 1958
LtCol Hector R. Migneault	24 May 1958 - 30 Jun 1959
Col Bernard T. Kelly	1 Jul 1958 - 5 Aug 1959
Col Houston Stiff	6 Aug 1959 - 4 Jan 1960
Col Harold S. Roise	5 Jan 1960 - 21 Nov 1960
Col Albert Arsenault	22 Nov 1960 - 27 Oct 1961

Col Franklin B. Nihart	28 Oct 1961 - 29 Mar 1963
Col Robert H. Twisdale	9 Jul 1963 - 30 Mar 1964
Col Oscar F. Peatross	31 Mar 1964 - 3 Apr 1966
Col Eugene H. Haffey	4 Apr 1966 - 1 Aug 1966
Col Lawrence F. Snoddy, Jr.	2 Aug 1966 - 20 Jan 1967
Col Charles C. Crossfield II	21 Jan 1967 - 14 Aug 1967
LtCol Russell E. Johnson	15 Aug 1967 - 21 Aug 1967
Col Ross R. Miner	22 Aug 1967 - 20 Feb 1968
Col Reverdy M. Hall	21 Feb 1968 - 15 Aug 1968
Col Herbert L. Beckington	16 Aug 1968 - 15 Aug 1968
Col Robert L. Nichols	8 Feb 1969 - 9 Jul 1969
Col Gildo S. Codispoti	10 Jul 1969 - 28 Feb 1970
Col Edmund G. Darning, Jr.	1 Mar 1970 - 4 Aug 1979
Col Robert H. Piehl	15 Aug 1970 - 31 Oct 1970
LtCol Keith L. Christensen	1 Nov 1970 - 13 Apr 1971
Col Anthony A. Monti	14 Apr 1971 - 12 Nov 1971
Col Forest J. Hunt	13 Nov 1971 - 31 May 1972
Col Robert N. Burhans	1 Jun 1972 - 30 Jul 1973
LtCol Robert D. White	31 Jul 1973 - 10 Sep 1973
Col John F. Roche III	11 Sep 1973 - 21 May 1974
Col John J. Keefe	22 May 1974 - 27 Feb 1975
Col Joseph Deprima	28 Feb 1975 - 11 Sep 1975
Col Haig Donabedian	12 Sep 1975 - 1 Nov 1977
Col John H. Blair	2 Nov 1977 - 27 Jul 1978
Col Charles A. Barstow	28 Jul 1978 - present

Appendix B

CHRONOLOGY

14 Aug 1917	Activated as the 7th Regiment at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
25 Aug 1917-29 Aug 1919	Regiment deployed in Cuba as a security force for American property.
6 Sep 1919	Regiment deactivated at Philadelphia.
1 Apr 1921-1 Sep 1924	1st Battalion, 7th Marines on active duty at San Diego, California, until deactivated.
6 Sep 1933	Regiment reactivated at Quantico.
14 Oct 1933-17 Jan 1934	2d Battalion, 7th Marines deployed in Cuban waters.
17 Jan 1934	Regiment deactivated at Quantico.
1 Jan 1941	Regiment reactivated at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.
28 Apr-10 May 1942	7th Marines arrived in Samoa.
18 Sep 1942-5 Jan 1943	Participated in the Guadalcanal Campaign.
9-13 Oct 1943	Regiment subjected to Japanese aerial bombardment at Oro Bay, New Guinea.
26 Dec 1943-1 May 1944	Participated in the New Britain Campaign.
15 Sep-30 Oct 1944	Participated in the Peleliu Campaign.
1 Apr-30 Jun 1945	Participated in the Okinawa Campaign.
30 Sep 1945	7th Marines landed at Tangku to participate in the occupation of North China.
15 Apr 1946	3d Battalion 7th Marines deactivated at Peitaiho, China.
5 Jan 1947	7th Marines departed China.
6 Mar 1947	Regiment deactivated at Camp Pendleton, California.
1 Oct 1947	7th Marines reactivated at Camp Pendleton. Its composition consisted of only four companies.
26 Jan-18 Feb 1949	Deployed in Alaska.
2 May-23 Jun 1949	Company C deployed to China to safeguard the withdrawal of Americans. Unit was the last element of FMF to depart China.
1 Oct 1949	7th Marines deactivated at Camp Pendleton.
17 Aug 1950	Regiment minus the 3d Battalion reactivated at Camp Pendleton.
11 Sep 1950	3d Battalion, 7th Marines reactivated at Kobe, Japan.
21 Sep 1950	7th Marines landed at Inchon, Korea and began active combat operations against enemy forces. Participation in the Korean War continued until 27 July 1953.
10 Mar 1955	Regiment departed Korea. Arrived at Camp Pendleton on 24 Mar.
27 Oct-14 Dec 1962	1st and 3d Battalions, 7th Marines participated in the Cuban Missile Crisis.
23 May 1965	7th Marines sailed for Okinawa; arrived between 9-18 June.
1 Jul 1965	3d Battalion, 7th Marines landed at Qui Nhon, Republic of Vietnam. First unit of regiment to commence operations against the enemy in Vietnam.
7 Jul-14 Aug 1965	Rest of regiment entered Republic of Vietnam.
23 Sep-13 Oct 1970	7th Marines departed the Republic of Vietnam for Camp Pendleton.

Appendix C

HONORS

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION STREAMER WITH ONE SILVER AND THREE BRONZE STARS

(Solomon Islands, 18 September-9 December 1942)
(Peleliu, Ngesebus, 15-29 September 1944)
(Okinawa, 1 April-21 June 1945)
(Korea, 21 September-11 October 1950)
(Korea, 27 November-11 December 1950)
(Korea, 21-26 April, 16 May-30 June, 11-25 September 1951)
(Vietnam, 14 August 1965-28-March 1966)
(Vietnam, 1 April 1966-15 September 1967)
(Vietnam, 16 September 1967-3 May 1968, 7 July-31 October 1968)

NAVY UNIT COMMENDATION STREAMER WITH ONE BRONZE STAR

(Korea, 11 August 1952-5 May 1953, 7-27 July 1953)
(Vietnam, 18-23 August 1965)

MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION STREAMER

(Vietnam, 4 May-6 July 1968)

WORLD WAR I VICTORY STREAMER WITH WEST INDIES CLASP

(27 August 1917-11 November 1918)

AMERICAN DEFENSE SERVICE STREAMER WITH ONE BRONZE STAR

(1 January-12 April 1941)

ASIATIC-PACIFIC CAMPAIGN STREAMER WITH ONE SILVER STAR

(Capture and Defense of Guadalcanal, 18 September 1942-5 January 1943)
(Eastern New Guinea Operation, 8 October-25 December 1943)
(Bismarck Archipelago Operation, 26 December 1943-1 March 1944)
(Western Caroline Islands Operation, 15 September-14 October 1944)
(Okinawa Gunto Operation, 1 April -30 June 1945)

WORLD WAR II VICTORY STREAMER

(7 December 1941-31 December 1946)

NAVY OCCUPATION SERVICE STREAMER WITH ASIA CLASP

(2-26 September 1945)

CHINA SERVICE STREAMER

(30 September 1945-5 January 1947)

NATIONAL DEFENSE SERVICE STREAMER WITH ONE BRONZE STAR

(14 August 1950-27 July 1954)
(1 January 1961-15 August 1974)

KOREAN SERVICE STREAMER WITH ONE SILVER AND FOUR BRONZE STARS

(North Korea Aggression, 21 September-2 November 1950)
(Communist China Aggression, 3 November 1950-24 January 1951)
(First U.N. Counteroffensive, 25 January-21 April 1951)
(Communist China Spring Offensive, 22 April-8 July 1951)
(U.N. Summer-Fall Offensive, 9 July-27 November 1951)
(Second Korea Winter, 28 November 1951-30 April 1952)
(Korean Defense, Summer-Fall, 1 May-30 November 1952)
(Third Korean Winter, 1 December 1952-30 April 1953)
(Korea, Summer-Fall 1953, 1 May-27 July 1953)

ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY STREAMER

(Cuba, 5 November-10 December 1962)

VIETNAM SERVICE STREAMER WITH TWO SILVER AND THREE BRONZE STARS

(Vietnam Defense Campaign, 1 July-24 December 1965)
(Vietnamese Counteroffensive Campaign, 25 December 1965-30 June 1966)
(Vietnamese Counteroffensive Phase II, 1 July 1966-31 May 1967)
(Vietnamese Counteroffensive Phase III, 1 June 1967-29 January 1968)
(Tet Counteroffensive, 30 January-1 April 1968)
(Vietnamese Counteroffensive Phase IV, 2 April-30 June 1968)
(Vietnamese Counteroffensive Phase V, 1 July-1 November 1968)
(Vietnam Counteroffensive Operation Phase VI, 2 November 1968-22 February 1969)
(Tet 69 Counteroffensive, 23 February-8 June 1969)
(Vietnam, Summer-Fall Campaign 1969, 9 June-31 October 1969)
(Vietnam, Winter-Spring 1970, 1 November 1969-30 April 1970)
(Sanctuary Counteroffensive, 1 May-30 June 1970)
(Vietnam Counteroffensive Phase VII, 1 July-13 October 1970)

KOREAN PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION STREAMER

(21-27 September 1950)
(27 November 1950-27 July 1953)

RÉPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ARMED FORCES MERITORIOUS UNIT CITATION (GALLANTRY CROSS WITH PALM)

(1 July 1965-2 September 1969)

VIETNAM MERITORIOUS CITATION CIVIL ACTIONS STREAMER

(21 September 1969-13 October 1970)

Appendix D

MEDALS OF HONOR

Sgt	John Basilone	1stBn,7thMar	24-25Oct42, Guadalcanal
PlSgt	Mitchell Paige	2dBn,7thMar	26Oct42, Guadalcanal
PFC	Arthur J. Jackson	3dBn,7thMar	18Sep44, Peleliu
PFC	Charles H. Roan	2dBn,7thMar	18Sep44, * Peleliu
PFC	John D. New	2dBn,7thMar	25Sep44, * Peleliu
Pvt	Wesley Phelps	3dBn,7thMar	4Oct44, * Peleliu
SSgt	Archie Van Winkle	1stBn,7thMar	2Nov50, Korea
Cpl	Lee H. Phillips	2dBn,7thMar	4Nov50, Korea
Sgt	James I. Poynter	1stBn,7thMar	4Nov50, * Korea
2dLt	Robert D. Reem	3dBn,7thMar	6Nov50, * Korea
1stLt	Frank N. Mitchell	1stBn,7thMar	26Nov50, * Korea
SSgt	Robert S. Kennemore	2dBn,7thMar	27-28Nov50, Korea
PFC	Hector A. Cafferata, Jr.	2dBn,7thMar	28Nov50, Korea
Capt	William E. Barber	2dBn,7thMar	28Nov-2Dec50, Korea
LtCol	Raymond G. Davis	1stBn,7thMar	1-4Dec50, Korea
PFC	Herbert A. Littleton	1stBn,7thMar	22Apr51, * Korea
Sgt	Frederick W. Mausert III	1stBn,7th Mar	12Sep51, * Korea
2dLt	George H. Ramer	3dBn,7thMar	12Sep51, * Korea
Cpl	David B. Champagne	1stBn,7thMar	28May52, * Korea
PFC	John D. Kelly	1stBn,7thMar	28May52, * Korea
SSgt	William E. Shuck, Jr.	3dBn,7thMar	3Jul52, * Korea
PFC	Jack W. Kelso	3dBn,7thMar	2Oct52, * Korea
SSgt	Lewis G. Watkins	3dBn,7thMar	7Oct52, * Korea
2dLt	George H. O'Brien, Jr.	3dBn,7thMar	27Oct52, Korea
Sgt	Daniel P. Matthews	2dBn,7th Mar	28Mar53, * Korea
SSgt	Ambrosio Guillen	2dBn,7thMar	25Jul53, * Korea
LCpl	Roy M. Wheat	3dBn,7thMar	11Aug67, * Vietnam
Cpl	Larry E. Smedley	1stBn,7thMar	20-21Dec67, * Vietnam
LCpl	Kenneth L. Worley	3dBn,7thMar	12Aug68, * Vietnam
PFC	Oscar P. Austin	2dBn,7thMar	23Feb69, * Vietnam
LCpl	Lester W. Weber	3dBn,7thMar	23Feb69, * Vietnam
LCpl	Jose F. Jimenez	3dBn,7thMar	28Aug69, * Vietnam
PFC	Ralph E. Dias	1stBn,7thMar	12Nov69, * Vietnam
LCpl	James D. Howe	3dBn,7thMar	6May70, * Vietnam

* Awarded posthumously

The device reproduced on the back cover is the oldest military insignia in continuous use in the United States. It first appeared, as shown here, on Marine Corps buttons adopted in 1804. With the stars changed to five points this device has continued on Marine Corps buttons to the present day.

